

**PROCEEDINGS**  
of the  
**WORLD ASSEMBLY**  
of the  
**World Council**  
**for the Welfare of the Blind**

**August 1-10, 1979**

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PROCEEDINGS  
of the  
WORLD ASSEMBLY

of the  
World Council  
for the Welfare of the Blind

held in  
Antwerp, Belgium

August 1-10, 1979

*Theme* — “COOPERATION”

## WORLD COUNCIL FOR THE WELFARE OF THE BLIND

### ORGANISATION MONDIALE POUR LA PROMOTION SOCIALE DES AVEUGLES

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Certain of the papers included in these Proceedings were originally delivered in languages other than English and, while every care has been taken to ensure accuracy in translation, it is possible that some variations from the original structure and sense may have occurred. Furthermore, certain papers prepared in the English language were delivered by speakers not entirely familiar with that language. Some editing has therefore been required. Our apologies are submitted for any inaccuracies that may have resulted therefrom. Due to lack of space, it has been necessary also in some cases to abridge the addresses. We feel sure that the speakers will appreciate the need for these slight editorial changes.



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## BACKGROUND OF THE CONFERENCE

### A BRIEF HISTORY OF WCWB

The international aspect of blind welfare dates from 1931, when a conference, attended by delegates from more than 30 countries, was held in New York. That conference led to a desire for a permanent international organization, which would maintain liaison between all working in the field of blind welfare. But the 30's proved politically too unstable to favour its establishment. After the Second World War, the United States and the United Kingdom sought a resumption of international cooperation on the New York scale, and in spite of the difficulties of the post-war years, a conference on "The Place of the Blind in the Modern World" was held at Oxford in 1949, at which Europe and North America were represented. Once again, the desire for a permanent council was strongly expressed, particularly by the representatives of Scandinavia. An international committee was elected, charged with the task of exploring the possibilities for the creation of a world organization. In 1951, in Paris, a draft constitution for an international organization was adopted, bringing into being the World Council for the Welfare of the Blind. General Assemblies have been held

in 1954 in Paris	on "Various Aspects of Blindness"
in 1959 in Rome	on "The Employment of the Blind"
in 1964 in New York	on "The Problems of the Blind in a Changing World"
in 1969 in New Delhi	on "The Blind in an Age of Science"
in 1974 in São Paulo	on "Resources and Relationships in Work with and for the Blind"

On July 31, 1979, there were 73 countries holding National Membership of the World Council for the Welfare of the Blind.

At the opening of this our Sixth Quinquennial Assembly, the composition of the Officers was as follows:

President: Mr. Boris V. Zimin.

Vice-Presidents: Mrs. Dorina de Gouvêa Nowill, Brazil; Sheikh Abdullah M. Al-Ghanim, Saudi Arabia; Mr. Hideyuki Iwahashi, Japan.

Honorary Treasurer: Mr. John C. Colligan, C.B.E.

Honorary Secretary General: Mr. Anders Arnör.

The aims of WCWB are international cooperation between organizations working for the welfare of the blind and prevention of blindness throughout the world.

WCWB has consultative status with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations, UNESCO and UNICEF and official relations with the World Health Organization; it is on the special list of the International Labour Office. It is also a member of the Council of World Organizations Interested in the Handicapped (CWOIH), a



member of the Board of the International Agency for the Prevention of Blindness, and has consultative status with the International Federation of Library Associations.

The General Assembly, the principal deliberative organ of the WCWB, which includes all Honorary, National, International, Sponsoring and Associate Members, meets every five years to consider reports on progress and administration, to hear talks and exchange views. It also agrees on recommendations to governments and adopts resolutions laying down minimum standards. The General Assembly also elects the WCWB officers, the President, the Vice-Presidents, the Treasurer, the Secretary General, and all other members of the Executive Committee, which governs the WCWB between the Assemblies. Out of the 35 members of the Executive Committee, no less than 25 of these represent the various regions of the world: 3 from Africa, 5 from East and South East Asia, 7 from Europe, 2 from the Middle East, 5 from North America and Oceania, 3 from Latin America and the Caribbean, plus two representatives of the international members.

The chairman of the Consultative Committee also has a seat on the Executive and there are three seats "at large" held by individually elected members.

The World Council publishes a quarterly newsletter, designed to act as a link between its members. It has a wide circulation, and is also made available to many international governmental and non-governmental organizations, and other groups interested in our field. It aims at keeping members informed of all changes in the administration or leadership of organizations of and for the blind the world over, of new legislation concerning the blind, of special projects or achievements in work for the blind, of future plans, meetings and conferences, etc. It also reports on past conferences, and reviews books and publications of special interest to the blind. The newsletter is produced in English, French and Spanish.

As far as possible, all documentation emanating from the Council's offices is published in both English and French.

The last Executive Committee of the World Council, held in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, in March 1977, decided to accept the kind invitation of the Nigerian Government for the venue of the Sixth World Assembly in Kaduna and chose as a theme for the debates: "Cooperation". However, due to unforeseen circumstances, it was unfortunately not possible to hold the Assembly in Nigeria and the meeting finally took place in Antwerp, Belgium.

All papers presented at the meeting will be found in the proceedings.

Paris, January 1980

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Miss Marina MAGALOFF, WCWB Paris  
Miss Doris TRAPPITT, RNIB London



## OPENING SESSION

### OFFICIAL GUESTS

Mr. G. DE WILDE, Cabinet Secretary, representing Mr. W. MARTENS, Prime Minister.

Mr. L. COEN, Chargé de Mission, representing Mr. H. SIMONET, Minister of Foreign Affairs.

Mrs. C. LECLERCQ, Attaché, representing Mr. A. CALIFICE, Minister of Social Security

Mrs. C. RUTH, Attaché, representing Mr. M. HANSENNE, Minister of the French Community.

Mr. D. COENS, Secretary of State for the Flemish Community.

Mr. J. LECLERCQ, Attaché, representing Mr. R. URBAIN, Minister of the Postal, Telegraph and Telephone Service

Mr. A. VERCAMMEN, Provincial Government, representing Mr. A. KINSBERGEN, Governor of the Province of Antwerp.

Mr. V. VAN EETVELT, Permanent Deputy, Province of Antwerp.

Mr. J. COEN, Senator, representing Mr. J. GOL, President of the P.R.L. (Parti des Réformes et de la Liberté).

## OPENING SESSION

Wednesday morning, August 1, 1979

### Opening Speech

by Mr. Boris V. Zimin, President

Your Excellencies, Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen, allow me in my capacity as the President, and on behalf of the World Council for the Welfare of the Blind, to cordially greet Mr. Dyckmans, the National Member of the World Council for the Welfare of the Blind and the Head of the Belgian delegation to the WCWB, our guests of honour, the representative of His Excellency the Prime Minister of Belgium, the representative of His Excellency the Minister for Foreign Affairs, the representative of His Excellency the Minister of the French Community, His Excellency the Governor of the Province of Antwerp, members of the Diplomatic Corps, representatives of the United Nations family of organizations, and representatives of other international organizations. It is my pleasure to greet Dr. Sonntag, the President of the International Federation of the Blind, Dr. Fatima Shah, the immediate Past President of the International Federation of the Blind, I cordially greet the delegates to this Sixth General Assembly, the Observers and the Guides.

The Sixth General Assembly is an important event in the life of our Organization. It has to develop the guidelines for the work in the forthcoming quinquennium. I wish great success to the participants of the Assembly. And now I have the honour to declare open the Sixth General Assembly of the World Council for the Welfare of the Blind.

And now it is my honour and pleasure to give the floor to the National Member of the World Council for the Welfare of the Blind from Belgium and the Head of the Belgian delegation in our Organization, Monsieur Dyckmans.

### Address by Mr. Achille Dyckmans

Co-President of the Belgian National Committee for the Welfare  
of the Visually Handicapped

Mr. President, Members of the Executive Committee, dear Colleagues, Ladies and Gentlemen.

I have been requested to speak at the opening ceremony, which gives me great pleasure.

As you know, the 1979 Assembly of the World Council for the Welfare of the Blind should have been held in Lagos, Nigeria, but for various reasons beyond their control, the leaders of the World Council

were obliged to convene it at a moment's notice in Antwerp; its unexpected organization in Belgium was not accomplished without difficulty, as you will imagine.

Besides the people I requested to help and who have given their moral and material support for the organization of this meeting, I should be failing in my duty if I did not mention my wife Mrs. Dyckmans, my Secretary Mrs. Cordara, and the Secretary of the Belgian National Committee for the Welfare of the Handicapped Mr. Van Campenhout, who have contributed to the preparation of this World Assembly.

As National Member and Head of the Belgian Delegation to WCWB and as Co-President of the Belgian National Committee for the Welfare of the Visually Handicapped—the headquarters of which is in Brussels—and on behalf of my colleague, Mr. de Vilder, second National Member for Belgium and Co-President of the National Committee, I wish you all a hearty welcome to our country and a very pleasant stay.

We also express our very sincere wishes for the success of this General Assembly; we trust that it will carry out its work in a spirit of mutual understanding and that the resolutions adopted at the conclusion of its meetings will be so well thought out that in the future we shall be able to record concrete results which will benefit all the visually handicapped throughout the world.

I will now give you some information about the Belgian National Committee for the Welfare of the Visually Handicapped. It was founded in 1962 and is composed of two branches: the Belgian Union of Neutral Organizations for the Visually Handicapped and the National Union of Catholic Organizations for the Blind. Together, the two branches of this National Committee include five groups of visually handicapped, five associations for the blind and eleven schools for the blind and partially sighted. Furthermore, two groups of visually handicapped and two associations for the blind, which do not belong to either of these two branches, are admitted as observers with consultative status. The structure of the National Committee is as follows: the General Assembly, the Executive Committee, composed of one Co-President, two branch delegates, one delegate for the associations, one delegate for the schools, i.e. a total of five representatives for each branch, plus one non-voting observer. Finally, there are four Working Groups of eight specialists (four persons for each branch) and one Group representing the associations of parents of visually handicapped children, the activities of which are different and clearly defined.

This National Committee represents the whole of the visually handicapped living in Belgium; its programme of action is of wide extent and its list of claims boundless. Both aim at the improvement of the moral and material conditions of all visually handicapped, Belgian and foreign, living in our country. Since its foundation, thanks to the spirit of collaboration and cooperation prevailing within this National Committee the results recorded today are most satisfactory, legislative measures have been enacted by the Government and particular advantages have been obtained from private associations.

Mr. Minister, Ladies and Gentlemen Representatives of Ministers,

Delegates of Public Authorities, Representatives of Embassies and Consulates,

On behalf of my colleagues of the Executive Committee and all the Members of WCWB, I wish to thank you warmly for honouring the Opening Ceremony of the General Assembly with your presence.

In so doing, you are each in your own way showing your interest in all the visually handicapped and at the same time in the improvement of their conditions of existence.

Ladies and Gentlemen Delegates of Associations of and for the Handicapped,

Your presence at this Opening Ceremony of the 1979 WCWB General Assembly is proof of your interest in the Belgian National Committee for the Welfare of the Visually Handicapped and in the Joint National Action of the Handicapped. The latter was created in 1969 under the auspices of the National Committee, I had the honour of being one of the founding members and was its first President for many years.

Joint National Action of the Handicapped comprises the main organizations of and for the handicapped in Belgium. Its action with the Public Authorities is very beneficial for the handicapped. Thanks to the altruism and efficacy of its members, the measures obtained to date for all categories of handicapped have been of great value. Joint National Action has organized several one-day seminars on a national level at which ministers and high-ranking civil servants interested in the problems of the handicapped have taken part.

I do not need to tell you just how much the collaboration between these two important Belgian Associations has proved useful, for more than one reason, for the defence of common interests, particularly when it concerns all the handicapped—sensory, physically and mentally. Let us hope that such team work will be carried on steadfastly for the greatest benefit of all.

Ladies and Gentlemen of the Press, Radio and Television,

More than ever today the spoken and written press plays a leading role in the life of the population. It is appreciated at its true worth when it presents its listeners and readers with precise communiques and articles on topics of interest. This is particularly true of anything that affects the lot of the handicapped in general. Unfortunately, in some cases the press publishes sensational news which does not always reflect the truth and sometimes does more harm than good to the cause of the handicapped and often hurts their pride.

Apart from these exceptions, I would be remiss if I did not give the members of the Press credit for the valuable help they can extend to the handicapped by supporting their integration into employment and everyday life, thus easing some of their daily problems by an appropriate adaptation within their family and the community. In so doing, they are rendering a useful service to the handicapped and I thank them in advance for all they can do for us.

After this brief description of the situation of the blind and visually handicapped persons as well as other categories of handicapped in Belgium, we are very glad that similar action is being taken on their

behalf in almost all other countries, as well as by international organizations such as the International Federation of the Blind and the World Council for the Welfare of the Blind, thanks to which we have the opportunity to meet in Antwerp. May these two great international agencies pursuing similar aims succeed in grouping as soon as possible all the organizations of and for the blind throughout the world under one banner, their experience and renown thus being of the greatest good for all concerned.

This is the wish I express and I thank you for your attention.

**Address by Mr. Henri Simonet**

Belgian Minister of Foreign Affairs

(read by Mr. L. Coen, Chargé de Mission)

On the occasion of the Sixth General Assembly of the World Council for the Welfare of the Blind, I should like to underline the interest that Belgium and the Belgian Government takes in the problems around which the work of your Assembly is centred.

In 1975, Belgium took the initiative of presenting to the General Assembly of the United Nations a draft resolution entitled "Declaration on the Rights of Handicapped Persons". This draft resolution, which rapidly obtained the co-sponsorship of more than fifty States, was adopted by the General Assembly by consensus.

At a time when throughout the whole world efforts are being made to better adapt structures to the legitimate aspirations of humanity, it is important that the people who are not in possession of all their physical faculties may find their rightful place in our society and, above all, be given the same opportunity as everyone else to develop and share as fully as possible in the activities of all.

Belgium is pleased that organizations like your own are contributing in such an efficient way to the realization of the objectives defined by the international bodies.

The Minister of Foreign Affairs would like to express his very best wishes for the success of this General Assembly and hopes that the work carried out during its meeting will produce useful results.

**Address by Mrs. C. Ruth**

Cabinet Attaché, Belgian Ministry of the French-Speaking Community

The Minister of the French-speaking Community has asked me to express his regrets that he is not able to be with you today: previous engagements have prevented him from participating in this Opening Ceremony of the Sixth World Assembly of the World Council for the Welfare of the Blind.

He has also requested me to welcome on his behalf all the organizations assembled here and to wish them success in their work.



It is, in fact, important to organize meetings such as these to enable the participants to share the experiences of other countries and to compare points of view on methods used and results obtained.

The subjects under discussion during the next few days show that real social integration of the visually handicapped is one of the main concerns of the organizations.

In Belgium, results of work in this field speak for themselves: there are few drop-outs during training and practically no failures.

Tribute should be paid to their leaders, but also to the courage and tenacity of the blind who wish to participate in the social and economic life of their country.

The problem of handicapped persons has been covered by different legislations which come under the responsibility of several Ministries. Tentative solutions have been found at different levels. The Community structure of Belgium has enabled the National Fund for the Social Regrouping of the Handicapped, the Fund for Medico-Socio-Pedagogical Care, and the granting of allowances to handicapped persons, to be united under one Minister.

May these new structures bring about better understanding of problems and above all their adequate solution.

During the Declaration of the Executive of the French Community to the Cultural Council, the Minister gave the Community the task of adopting a strategy for all, with particular attention to the most disadvantaged, and in cooperation with all, that is, with the interested persons themselves.

Indeed, thanks to this, a continuous assessment of action taken by the Government has been made possible. The Minister therefore hopes to be able to count on the collaboration of welfare organizations for the blind.

Finally, the Minister, Mr. Hansenne, has asked me to convey his congratulations to the organizers of this Assembly, who have realized, in two months, a meeting of such dimensions.

It is certain that this Sixth World Assembly of the World Council for the Welfare of the Blind will be advantageous to everyone.

### **Response by the President**

Your Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen, to begin with I am anxious to express on behalf of our World Council and on my own behalf sincere gratitude to the governmental bodies of Belgium and to the National Organization for the Blind of Belgium for an opportunity to hold the Sixth General Assembly of the World Council for the Welfare of the Blind in the city of Antwerp, for the kind attention and the fine conditions provided for the successful functioning of the Assembly. Here I would like to very cordially thank Monsieur Dyckmans and all his assistants for the great efforts they have made in arranging the working and social programmes of our Assembly here in Antwerp.

As you know, the success of our General Assembly depends to a great extent on its programme. My thanks go therefore to Sir John

Wilson, Chairman of the Programme Committee, and to all the members of the Committee for the immense job they have done to include in the Agenda the most important and urgent questions concerning our policy on future ways of integrating the blind and for their efforts in providing new and interesting forums of discussion: I mean a session of young leaders, working groups etc. . . .

I very much appreciate the fine work done by our Honorary Secretary General, Mr. Anders Arnör, and his assistants working in the Paris office—Mrs. Hilary Gohier and Miss Marina Magaloff—during the whole quinquennium and especially in the course of preparation of the General Assembly. I wish to thank them most sincerely on behalf of the Executive Committee and on my own behalf.

## KEYNOTE ADDRESS

by Mr. Robert K. A. Gardiner

Commissioner for Economic Planning, Ghana

Mr. President, ladies, gentlemen and distinguished guests, I am happy and grateful to the Planning Committee for inviting me to take part in the deliberations of this Assembly. I am particularly grateful to the writers of the expert papers and reports for our study and discussion; such papers present a wealth of scientific knowledge and experience, and their value is incalculable. In preparing to be here with you, and in refreshing my acquaintance with the work of the Council, I have found the report of the proceedings of previous assemblies most helpful. This type of material would not ordinarily be available to most parts of the world and so the Assembly is a unique opportunity for the development of a world outlook—a 20th Century outlook—on the problems affecting the welfare of the blind and their solutions. I am also to express thanks to the host committee and all who have contributed to setting the scene for this meeting. Indeed, the title of this meeting may mean that we all may be as one.

In the company of committed, devoted and experienced persons in the work for the blind, I feel the need to declare my meagre credentials in order to avoid unwarranted presumptions. My involvement in work for the blind began in the 1950's with the Gold Coast (now Ghana) Society for the Blind. The people and government of Ghana were becoming aware that traditional social institutions were not coping effectively with social needs in rapidly changing conditions. For example, migrations from rural areas were depriving village communities of their young and able-bodied men and women, and households made up of old persons who could hardly fend for themselves were proving unequal to the task of taking care of the blind and other handicapped persons. The efficiency of extended family as a form of mutual aid and social security was showing signs of breaking down.

It was under such circumstances that the Ghana Society for the Blind was formed with government assistance. Some of us had the privilege at that time of working with Sir John Wilson. In those pioneering days he had already visited Ghana and reported on the high incidence of blindness in the onchocerciasis valleys of the northern Savannah Belts. The Ghana Department of Welfare Services for the Blind served as a model for work initiated later in several African countries. It is of some interest to recall that the first modern braille code for languages in Black Africa was for Ghanaian languages (Fante, Ga and Ewe).

In studying the literature for this meeting, I have formed the impression that the Council does not operate as a major aid donor organization nor does it raise funds for large-scale projects but the



problems and needs for which it expresses concern arouse voluntary organizations, United Nations specialized agencies, the churches, governments and international financial institutions to take necessary action. A case in point is the Co-ordinated International Campaign Against River Blindness in West Africa. The need for such action was voiced by the Prevention of Blindness Committee of this Council. Now, under the leadership of the World Bank, UNDP and WHO, several governments (Britain, France, The Netherlands, West Germany, United States, Belgium and Canada) are sponsoring a twenty-year programme in seven African countries (Dahomey, Ghana, Ivory Coast, Mali, Niger, Togo and Upper Volta) at a cost of 120 million dollars. When the vectors are cleared or got under control, fertile valleys are to be settled by peasant farming communities which will include large proportions of blind persons. In playing such a role, the Council serves as a catalyst.

The African countries concerned, some of them in the poor drought afflicted countries in the Sahel, cannot finance such a project on their own at the present time. Seventeen out of the 25 least developed and poorest countries of the world are in Africa, south of the Sahara. The problems of the development of the economies of these countries have the direct bearing on the part they play in any common endeavour such as the work of the World Council for the Welfare of the Blind. The poor in Third World Countries, where some 80 per cent of visually handicapped persons are found, live, in the words of the President of the World Bank, "in absolute poverty, characterized by malnutrition, illiteracy, squalid surroundings, high infant mortality and low life expectancy as to be beneath any reasonable definition of human decency." The relevance of the work of this Council to the conditions described by the President of the World Bank, is set out in the address of the last assembly by Mr. Boulter when he said, "The majority of those blind people whom we serve need never have become blind had there existed in our countries adequate medical facilities or had appropriate standards of sanitation and hygiene been available universally. Most of the blind people on our register would never have had their names inscribed thereon."

Mr. Chairman, ladies and gentlemen, this is not the time or place to dwell at length on the international dialogue between the developed and underdeveloped countries but a few remarks may help us to put our problems in the right perspective. For instance, the ratio between average incomes of the richest and poorest ten per cent of the world's population is now 13 : 1. Two-hundred years ago the ratio was 3 : 2. The process of development has created inequalities which are increasing. The developed countries of today enjoy the advantages of an early start, accumulated knowledge, capital and experience. The late starters seek arrangements which will stabilize the prices of their raw materials and increase their export earnings. They also seek access to the markets of industrialized countries for their semi-manufactures and manufactures. This implies a reduction or removal of tariffs and the liberalization of trade generally.

The debate of these problems continues in several forums, particularly in UNCTAD, United Nations Committee for Economic Planning, United Nations Economic and Social Council and in conferences convened by non-governmental bodies. Next year, when the General Assembly of the United Nations discusses the strategy for the third development decade, it will address itself to the demand of the developing countries for the establishment of a new economic order. It is recognized that the process of adjustment and accommodation is needed to effect a peaceful transition to a new international division of labour, equitable sharing of the gains of economic endeavour and a stable world economy. Such changes would provide some basis for equal relations among countries which come together to promote and execute global programmes.

Out of the debate has emerged the concept of a basic needs strategy for world economic development which aims at the elimination of hunger and malnutrition, the provision of clothing, water, shelter, health and education for the population of the world at an agreed minimum level by the year 2000.

Mr. Chairman, ladies and gentlemen, you may have noticed that the provision of basic needs corresponds to the removal of the characteristics of poverty listed by the President of the World Bank and the causes of blindness pinpointed by Mr. Eric Boulter. Coincidentally, the year 2000 is over the target date for achieving the goals of the International Agency for the Prevention of Blindness and for the World Health Organization's target of health for all.

What I am suggesting is that, as citizens of the world, we cannot ignore the discussions of the new international economic order which will enable all countries to participate effectively and with dignity in the global endeavour to rid the world of scourges and conflicts as well as to develop understanding for some of the important causes of human misery in our age.

I have been struck by the expressions "organizations of" and "organizations for" the welfare of the blind. Such expressions mark stages in the development of public concern for particular issues, in this case for the provision of welfare services for the blind but naturally as the services produce results the beneficiaries express a desire to participate in the management of affairs which affect them intimately. Such verbal distinction may be the source of friction but at present it seems to me that the situation is sufficiently fluid and the Chairman of the International Federation of the Blind has practically taken the words out of my mouth. We should plan to anticipate future demands and accusations of discrimination against disabled minorities.

The attendance at the Assembly shows that those who may be inclined to think in terms of organizations of and organizations for the blind are working together to build up enough strength for tackling specific problems in partnership with vast intergovernmental and international agencies. Ultimately we all look forward to a world council of and for the blind. So far those who support and serve the Council are undaunted and undiscouraged. Some visually handicapped persons, by helping themselves and cooperating with those who help them, have

risen above apparently insuperable barriers. May this unique collective endeavour among individuals, groups, national and world bodies continue to flourish in the interests of and for the benefit of men everywhere.

The Council does not appear to have internal conflicts and confrontations—the ties that plague international organizations everywhere today. Some of the economic issues I have touched on are taken care of by the principle that regional needs be related to regional resources and local activities should be based essentially on local resources supplemented where necessary with external resources in services and in other ways. When I mentioned the possibility of racial tensions, I was told by Sir John Wilson that an advantage in being blind is that the blind are invariably colour blind.

How does the Council avoid conflicting ideologies, religions, territorial claims—because they are all represented in the 70-odd membership of this Council? Perhaps the answer to this lies in the unique qualities of our President, Mr. Zimin. The welfare of the blind in the USSR alone is a great challenge but for years you have sustained services in your own country and presided over the affairs of this Council with an impeccable record of impartiality. For this the world will always remain indebted to you. When the day comes for you to retire from the Chair, all of us, members and non-members of this organization will miss you. May the performance of the Council continue to be exemplary. Thank you.

## IN MEMORIUM—A TRIBUTE BY THE PRESIDENT

And now, Ladies and Gentlemen, I want to say the following. Time is inexorable and it is with deep regret that we have to announce the passing away of several colleagues of ours who have given all their talents and efforts to the noble cause of development of the welfare of the visually handicapped.

**Charles Hedkvist:** For nearly 20 years Charles Hedkvist was the leading personality of the blind in Sweden and the Scandinavian countries and, in later years, a prominent figure in the international field. He was the President of the World Council for the Welfare of the Blind and an Honorary Life Member. Under his presidency the Council grew in prestige and effectiveness especially in the strengthening of its relations with the United Nations and its Specialized Agencies.

**Eero Hakkinen:** He took part in all the General Assemblies of the World Council and was elected to its Executive Committee and became a Vice-President of the World Council. He was an active member of the International Council for the Executive of the Visually Handicapped, where he served two terms on the Executive Committee.

**Mrs. Queenie Captain:** Her outstanding organizational ability, her complete confidence in and encouragement of those who worked with her, have been mainly responsible for the Indian National Association for the Blind's reputation of being one of the fastest developing social welfare organizations in the world.

**John Jarvis:** He served as Secretary General of the World Council. It can be claimed without fear of contradiction that the level, growth and influence that the World Council achieved during this period was attributable in very large measure to the administrative ability and devotion that John Jarvis brought to his important office.

**Don Ignacio Satrustegui:** Member of the Executive Committee of the World Council and an Honorary Life Member. He was one of the most outstanding leaders of the blind within the Spanish National Organization and in international work for the blind.

**Richard Kinney:** Dr. Kinney was an outstanding leader of the deaf-blind throughout the world. For a long time he headed the Hadley School for the Blind. He was Chairman of WCWB Committee on Services to the Deaf-Blind and an initiator and organizer of the First World Conference on Services to Deaf-Blind Youths and Adults, which drafted the Declaration of Rights of the Deaf-Blind.

They were all our friends and they will long be remembered for their devotion to the blind. And now I would ask you to kindly stand up and observe a minute's silent tribute to our departed friends.



## MESSAGES

A number of messages were received, some of which are reproduced below:

**Amadou-Mahtar M'Bow, Director-General, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)**

I should like, on behalf of UNESCO, and in my own name to convey cordial greetings to the participants of the Sixth World Assembly of the World Council for the Welfare of the Blind.

Since its foundation your organization has made great efforts in favour of the blind which are in line both with Unesco's concern for the handicapped and its general policy concerning the rights of man. The work carried out by your General Assembly should contribute to the furthering of such praiseworthy action, and I wish you every success.

**Estefania Aldaba-Lim, Special Representative, International Year of the Child**

Please accept my sincerest congratulations on your tremendous initiative in the UN International Year of the Child in holding the Sixth World Assembly of the World Council for the Welfare of the Blind. It is of particular significance that this year, when more than 146 participating governments, and individuals and organizations alike are promoting the cause of mankind's most precious, vulnerable and totally dependent resource—our children—that your gathering of experts should devote a whole session to the rights of blind children. Apart from the integral rights of the child as enunciated in the UN Declaration the world owes a special duty to those children who are disadvantaged in this way. The massive and cruel waste on armaments is a daily reminder of the real resources we can command if we have a global will to give our children the best we have to give. I commend your pioneering work and hope your earnest and workmanlike discussions will inspire others to help prevent blindness in children and arrest eye diseases at an early age. We adults owe these children a joyous vision of the future.

**Rehabilitation International** extends all good wishes for the success of your congress and values your continued cooperation.

**James L. Bomar, Jr., President-Elect, Rotary International**

On behalf of Rotary International, I wish you all success in your efforts to seek and carry out effective programmes to aid the blind. Rotarians worldwide share your concern for the welfare of the blind as exemplified by the many eye camps sponsored by the Rotary clubs of Southern Asia. Rotary is also proud of its many members who have been so active in programmes benefitting the blind, such as Sir John Wilson, Chairman of your Programme Committee, and Rotary International

Past Director Soli Pavri, of Bombay, India, who has been active in the work of the National Association for the Blind in India.

May your service and the service of Rotary clubs and Rotarians worldwide continue to light the way for the blind.

Several messages were received from governments, national organizations of and for the blind, institutions, etc.

## ELECTION OF COMMITTEES

### **Credentials and Proxies Committee:**

Mr. Loyal E. Apple, *Chairman*  
Dr. Claude Chambet  
Mr. John C. Colligan, C.B.E.  
Miss Winnie Ng

### **Nominations Committee:**

Captain H. Desai, *Chairman*  
Mr. M. Djelloul  
Dr. H. Geissler  
Mr. Nihad Murad  
Mr. H. Pradilla-Cobos  
Mr. Ross C. Purse  
Prof. Tibor Vas

### **Resolutions Committee:**

Mr. Bengt Lindqvist, *Chairman*  
Sheikh A. Al-Ghanim  
Mr. Geoffrey F. Gibbs  
Mr. Ismaïla Konate  
Mr. Oral O. Miller  
Dr. Helmut Pielasch  
Mrs. E. Molina de Stahl  
Dr. Rajendra T. Vyas



PROFESSIONAL SESSION 1  
COOPERATION IN HUMAN RIGHTS

Wednesday afternoon, August 1, 1979

Chairman: Mr. Eric T. Boulter, C.B.E., United Kingdom

**THE RIGHTS OF THE DISABLED—COOPERATION OF  
ORGANIZATIONS OF AND FOR THE BLIND IN PROMOTING  
THE RIGHTS OF THE DISABLED WITHIN THE GENERAL  
CONTEXT OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND IN ACTION TO SUPPORT  
THE INTERNATIONAL YEAR FOR THE DISABLED—1981'**

The subject of this paper as it was proposed by the Programme Committee of your Assembly contains three separate though closely related items which it is my intention to discuss separately under the relevant headings. Accordingly, I would like to take first the question of the *rights of the disabled*.

As you may know, the United Nations General Assembly at its 30th session in 1975 proclaimed the *Declaration on the Rights of Disabled Persons*. In doing so, the Assembly reconfirmed its faith in human rights and fundamental freedom and in the principles of peace, the dignity and worth of the human person and the promotion of social justice, as proclaimed by the Charter of the United Nations, and recalled the principles laid down in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other related declarations.

The Declaration on the Rights of Disabled Persons contains the following rights among others:

- The inherent right to respect for their human dignity;
- The same fundamental rights as their fellow-citizens of the same age;
- The right to enjoy a decent life, as normal and full as possible;
- The right to the measures designed to enable them to become as self-reliant as possible;
- The right to the rehabilitation and other services which will hasten the process of their social integration or reintegration;
- The right to economic and social security.

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( Paper prepared for presentation at the 6th General Assembly of the World Council for the Welfare of the Blind, 1–10 August 1979 at Antwerp, Belgium by Esko Kosunen, Senior Social Affairs Officer (International Year for Disabled Persons) Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs).

In proclaiming the Declaration the General Assembly also called "for national and international action to ensure that it will be used as a common basis and frame of reference for the protection of these rights".

No doubt the process of social integration of disabled persons into society would be greatly enhanced if the governments of all countries would recognize these rights and make conscious efforts to uphold and implement them through practical measures.

A report on the implementation of the Declaration in different countries was recently (in February 1979) before the United Nations Commission for Social Development as an annex to the report of the Secretary-General on the World Social Situation in 1978. The report reveals that the Declaration apparently has not yet led to any practical measures. Several countries have indicated that the existing legislation and rehabilitation services guarantee an implementation of the rights proclaimed in the Declaration. Others have suggested that measures that were under consideration at the time of reporting were likely to achieve the same. In a few replies, however, it was clearly recognized that even with a well developed system of rehabilitation services many things still needed to be done in order to ensure full equality to disabled persons regarding the enjoyment of commonly available services in a modern society. In one country's reply for instance it was pointed out that measures needed to be taken to render cultural services more accessible and useable so that the blind, among other things, could read or listen to books, periodicals and newspapers that are readily available to other people in society. Equality of opportunity in this respect, as you well know, is still far away.

No further action concerning the Declaration and its implementation was suggested by the Commission nor by the Economic and Social Council which had the report before it at its first regular session in April 1979. However, the World Council for the Welfare of the Blind used the opportunity of submitting to the Council a statement containing the text of the Declaration of the Rights of Deaf-Blind Persons. On the basis of that statement, the delegation of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland submitted to the Council a draft decision with a view to bringing this Declaration to the attention of the United Nations General Assembly at its 34th session to take place late this year. This proposal was approved by the Council and, accordingly, the Declaration of the Rights of Deaf-Blind Persons will be considered by the General Assembly under item "International Year for Disabled Persons".

### **Cooperation between the United Nations and Non-Governmental Organizations**

What was just said about the action of the World Council for the Welfare of the Blind is also a good example of the possibilities that exist for the participation and involvement of non-governmental organizations in the activities of the United Nations and also for co-operation between these organizations. The initiative of the WCWB has

led to an important decision by the Economic and Social Council which may result in further action by the United Nations. This initiative was possible because the WCWB has a consultative status with the Economic and Social Council and can thus submit statements to that body. Another channel for close cooperation between the United Nations, its specialized agencies and non-governmental organizations, such as the WCWB is offered within the framework of the Ad Hoc Inter-Agency Meetings on Disability Prevention and Rehabilitation. These meetings have been held on a regular basis since 1950 and are attended by representatives of the interested United Nations offices and agencies, such as the United Nations Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs, United Nations Development Programme, United Nations Children's Fund, WHO, UNESCO, ILO, International Social Security Association as well as the Council of World Organizations Interested in the Handicapped. Through the last mentioned body a representative of the WCWB has also been among the regular participants of the inter-agency meetings. Many initiatives taken in the inter-agency meetings have led to action benefitting the blind and other disabled persons. I mention only a few of these in this connection:

- At its 1970 session the Ad Hoc Inter-Agency meeting recommended the inclusion into the work programme of the United Nations Social Development Division of a study of rehabilitation services for the blind in developing countries. Accordingly, such a study was planned and carried out by the United Nations in cooperation with the ILO, WHO, UNESCO, Helen Keller International and the Royal Commonwealth Society for the Blind, as well as WCWB. The document "Rehabilitation Services for the Blind in Developing Countries" was published in 1977 for the United Nations by the WCWB in cooperation with the American Foundation for the Blind and Helen Keller International which provided editorial and production services.
- At another initiative of your late President, Dr. Charles Hedkvist, a special session of the 1975 Ad Hoc Inter-Agency meeting was devoted to an examination of the findings of the above study. At this session, certain guidelines for future development of services for the blind were agreed upon. These guidelines, covering prevention of blindness, education, vocational rehabilitation and production of braille and talking books, as well as the supply of technical aids, were incorporated into the published document.
- Thirdly, I should like to mention a more general achievement: At the initiative of a recent Ad Hoc Inter-Agency meeting, the United Nations Development Programme issued in April 1978 a Technical Advisory Note on Disability Prevention and Rehabilitation of the Disabled, which Note describes different aspects of the problem of disability and indicates ways and sources for technical assistance in this field. The Note is available in UNDP field offices in developing countries and may be helpful to governments interested in obtaining external help for the improvement of services in this area.

## **Support of the International Year for Disabled Persons**

By the proclamation of the United Nations General Assembly, 1981 will be celebrated as the International Year for Disabled Persons with "full participation" as its theme. Its objectives are to promote services for disability prevention and rehabilitation, to encourage research designed to facilitate the practical participation of disabled persons in daily life and to educate and inform the public of the rights of disabled persons to participate in and contribute to various aspects of economic, social and political life.

In proclaiming the Year, the General Assembly invited "all Member States and the organizations concerned to give their attention to the establishment of measures and programmes to implement the objectives of the International Year for Disabled Persons". Accordingly, it is hoped that also the World Council for the Welfare of the Blind and its affiliates in different countries will keep this matter in mind in planning their activities for the next two years. It is, of course, extremely important for the success of the Year that disabled persons will take an active role in the Year's observance.

A draft international programme for the year was considered by the Advisory Committee for the International Year for Disabled Persons at its meeting in March 1979. The Committee is composed of the representatives of 23 different countries of which one is the host to your Assembly, Belgium. The Committee adopted a number of recommendations concerning activities at the national, regional and international levels. These recommendations will be submitted in a report of the Secretary-General to the consideration of the 34th Session of the United Nations General Assembly, which will begin its work in coming September. This same session of the Assembly will thus consider two items of importance to the participants of this Assembly: the Declaration of the Rights of Deaf-Blind Persons and the Programme for the International Year for Disabled Persons.

In this connection, I would like to mention, briefly, some of the committee's recommendations that might be of particular interest to your Assembly. These are as follows:

- Preparation of a draft long-term programme of action in consultation with Member States, specialized agencies of the United Nations and international non-governmental organizations of and for the disabled; the purpose of the programme would be to help implement the objectives of the IYDP as well as the principles laid down in the Declaration on the Rights of Disabled Persons and, in particular, assist developing countries in this respect;
- Organization of a symposium of experts in 1981 on ways and means of promoting technical cooperation in the field of rehabilitation of disabled persons, particularly between developing countries;
- Organization of regional meetings, i.e. of officers responsible for national programmes on the prevention of disability and rehabilitation of disabled persons;



- Widest possible dissemination of the technical advisory note on disability prevention and rehabilitation prepared by the United Nations Development Programme in 1978;
- Adoption by United Nations agencies of the policy of employing more disabled persons in their staffs;
- Adoption by the United Nations agencies of the policy of holding their meetings, to the extent possible, where the facilities provided are accessible to all, including users of wheelchairs, the blind and the deaf;
- Adoption of measures by which the means of international passenger transport (by air, rail, road or ship) as well as the respective terminal facilities could be rendered accessible to all;
- Preparation of a series of manuals on eliminating or modifying architectural barriers;
- Facilitation of the exchange of experience among countries in the field of rehabilitation (fellowship holders should include disabled persons);
- Encouragement of activities of the organizations of disabled persons to contribute to the promotion of world peace and peaceful relations among States and peoples and encouraging disabled persons to organize themselves all over the world;
- Launching a public information campaign to disseminate information on the objectives of IYDP, enlighten the public and heighten its awareness of the rights of disabled persons to participate in and contribute to the economic, social and political life of their societies.

As was said a while ago, the final decision on this and other recommendations of the Committee will be made by the General Assembly in which all the Member States of the United Nations will have the opportunity of expressing their views on these recommendations.

It should be emphasized, however, that a major part of the IYDP activities is expected to take place at the national level, hopefully in every country. All interested groups and organizations are invited to participate in those activities and not only to participate but also to plan, initiate and carry out activities of their own. Each country and each group or organization may want to choose its own ways of observing the Year. A common goal for these activities might be to increase public understanding of the disability and the awareness of the general public of the problems the disability can bring about. The Year's activities might also be aimed at promoting the extension of rehabilitation services, so that these could be reached by all or at least a great majority of disabled persons in each country and at reducing or even eliminating the obstacles that there still might be to the integration of disabled persons into society and to their full participation in all aspects of society's life.

The United Nations has long enjoyed the active cooperation of the World Council for the Welfare of the Blind and its officers. We hope to

be able to continue enjoying it, particularly now when preparations are under way for the International Year for Disabled Persons and especially during the Year itself.

I should like to express my best wishes for a most successful Assembly and hope that its deliberations and decisions result in improvements of conditions of blind people in all parts of the world.



## THE RIGHTS OF THE BLIND CHILD

by Dr. Michael Irwin

UNICEF Representative in Bangladesh

The Rights of the Blind Child obviously will not be less than the rights of the sighted child.

In November 1959, the United Nations General Assembly adopted the Declaration of the Rights of the Child. Basically, the ten carefully-worded principles of this Declaration state that all children are entitled to:

1. the enjoyment of the rights mentioned, without any exception, regardless of race, colour, sex, religion or nationality;
2. special protection, opportunities and facilities to enable them to develop in a healthy and normal manner, in freedom and dignity;
3. a name and a nationality;
4. social security, including adequate nutrition, housing, recreation and medical services;
5. special treatment, education and care if handicapped;
6. love and understanding, and an atmosphere of affection and security, in the care and under the responsibility of their parents whenever possible;
7. free education and recreation, and equal opportunity to develop their individual abilities;
8. prompt protection and relief in times of disaster;
9. protection against all forms of neglect, cruelty and exploitation; and
10. protection from any form of racial, religious or other discrimination, and an upbringing in a spirit of peace and universal brotherhood.

Although there are many sighted and blind children, especially those living in the richer countries of the world, who already have most of these "Rights", the situation is unfortunately very different for millions and millions of children in the less developed countries who receive no basic medical attention, enjoy no primary educational facilities, and live short and deprived lives in areas of great poverty.

However, we must not consider the Declaration of the Rights of the Child as simply a "piece of paper" just because the Rights it proclaims are still unavailable to so many children. The fact that there is general recognition that these Rights exist is a vital first step to achieving them. We should remember that in many parts of the world, it is really not long ago when child labour was a common practice, and where medical care and free education have only become widely available fairly recently.

I am sure we can all support the statement in the Preamble of the Declaration of the Rights of the Child that "Mankind owes to the child the best it has to give." Also, we will all agree with the remark by Mr. Nehru, when he was Prime Minister of India, that "No work can be more important than the care of the child." Such statements are especially true of the child who has a severe handicap. All the principles of the U.N. Declaration can be easily applied to the special situation of the blind child. Moreover, we are very much concerned that the blind child must not be neglected because of his or her handicap; and also we realize that in raising the blind child one must not be over-protective. It is vital for the blind child to become as self-reliant as is possible, compared with sighted children, and to grow into a truly contributory member of Society, who eventually obtains considerable economic security.

Of course, I hope that one does not have to emphasize that perhaps the most important Right of any Blind Child is the Right to See, *if* an operation could provide sight. Although I am told that only about 5 per cent of blind children in the world (such as those with congenital cataracts) could have their birthright of sight restored with corrective surgery, it is obvious that nothing should prevent such treatment being provided for these children (and especially if the only reason is poverty).

Because of its magnitude, a word must be said about the prevention of nutritional blindness which is a major cause of blindness today among children in Africa and Asia. It is estimated that at least 100,000 children are going blind every year from xerophthalmia. Emergency measures, in some countries, for dealing with this disease involve the massive distribution of high-potency vitamin A capsules (for example, in Bangladesh, UNICEF is importing 30 million of these capsules annually). But, more important, the long-range solution is to improve children's diets by widespread educational programmes.

Having just mentioned UNICEF, as I am here at this World Assembly to represent that organization, and as the WCWB is one of the non-governmental bodies which has consultative status with our Executive Board, I would now like to say a few words about UNICEF. As it is an inter-governmental organization, our main contacts are usually with Government agencies. Our principle objective, of course, is to help the development of services for children, especially for the children in the poorest parts of the world, such as those in the rural areas and urban slums of the developing countries.

In the past, because we have to consider the priorities set by individual governments, projects for children already handicapped have unfortunately received a fairly low priority, although UNICEF's resources have been used to support centres for the training of teachers for the blind, and for providing some essential equipment. But, we have the important responsibility in UNICEF of advocating for the rights of children, and encouraging governments to focus more and more attention on projects for children. In fact, together with many non-governmental organizations, we can try to show the path along which governments can go. And, although I expect UNICEF's general policy with respect to services for blind children will mainly continue to be

that prevention should come first (through various health and nutrition projects), I believe that we will, in future, be gradually doing more for blind children throughout the world. Today, we are looking for ways to increase our cooperation with both governmental and non-governmental agencies which are involved with projects for handicapped children (blind, deaf and crippled) in developing countries. One example of this is that, last year, UNICEF asked Rehabilitation International to make a study on "Serving the Needs of the World's Disabled Children", and this report will be presented to our Executive Board next May.

We are very uncertain just how many blind children there are in the world today, and how many of them receive any form of special care or education. In Bangladesh, where I have worked since February 1977, we believe that there are about 200,000 blind children, under the age of 16, with less than 1,000 at present being helped, by either a government or non-government agency, to become self-reliant. In India, the figure is at least 250,000, and some estimates go as high as one million in that country, with only 15,000 or so being assisted. In Africa, the figures are naturally not as great as in Asia, but there are still many blind children on this continent who wait for special attention. This is a depressing picture. And, in the developing world of Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Middle East, the situation of the average blind child is unfortunately likely to get worse as populations increase and put additional strains on the existing services: the World Bank estimates that in most low-income countries, the number of children will be almost twice as large in the year 2000 as it was in 1975.

Because only a relatively small percentage of blind children, in the poorer countries of the world, receive any kind of special care, a very important Right now for the rest of them, in these areas, is simply to have a Future which is better than the Present. To help the large numbers of blind children in Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Middle East, much more needs to be done. Unfortunately, because of the many priorities existing in these less developed countries, programmes to provide special assistance for blind children receive relatively little financial support from local resources. Non-governmental organizations, such as those which most of you represent at this WCWB World Assembly, have a major role to play in trying to generate greater interest, and provide more financial aid, for projects for blind children throughout the world.

In countries like Bangladesh, India, Indonesia and Pakistan (just to name a few), where so many blind children are often the most vulnerable, the most neglected and the most deprived of all children, a little money can go a long way. I will give you an example, in which I am personally involved. In April 1978, a new non-governmental organization called Assistance for Blind Children (or simply, ABC) was established in Bangladesh. We have been fortunate in receiving financial support from Christoffel Blindenmission and the Royal Commonwealth Society for the Blind, and from groups and individuals in Bangladesh, the Federal Republic of Germany, France, the Netherlands, Switzerland, the United Kingdom and the United States. In Bangladesh, the construction of a hostel for at least ten blind children, at a school where

an integrated education programme exists, costs about \$2,700; \$20 a month will pay for all the expenses of a blind child residing and studying in one of these hostels; and the total cost of removing a congenital cataract is around \$25.

In thinking of the rehabilitation of blind children in the less developed countries, much great attention must be given now, than in the past, to the large majority who live in the rural areas, who have little opportunity of being included in the projects which are usually located in the towns and cities. This is where the need for special services is usually the greatest. Many of the rural blind children simply do not participate at all in either home or village life but remain dependent on others (later, when old enough, some are sent out to beg). These blind children need to be helped to share in the daily activities of village life and to get involved in productive work such as poultry raising, fruit and vegetable growing, and local crafts. In Bangladesh, ABC is beginning such a project, but it will only be able to help a few children each year. Programmes already developed for adult blind persons, in rural areas, by Christoffel Blindenmission, Helen Keller International and the Royal Commonwealth Society for the Blind, in Africa and Asia, are encouraging but more needs to be done, and especially for children.

1979 has been proclaimed as the International Year of the Child. Although this is a year dedicated to the well-being of all children in all countries, certain issues affecting children will be attracting special attention. For us, at this WCWB World Assembly, it should be the blind child: our increasing concern for this child could perhaps be demonstrated by establishing a Technical Committee on Services for Blind Children. Such a specialized group could function like the other WCWB technical bodies: it could assist in coordinating our efforts, and developing projects, for blind children throughout the world, and thus help to obtain more Rights for many children, who are presently denied them. I believe this would be a most appropriate step for us to take, for all blind children, in this International Year of the Child.



# THE RIGHT TO UNDERSTANDING—THE PRACTICAL OBJECTIVES OF A PUBLIC RELATIONS PROGRAMME TO COUNTER MYTHS ABOUT BLINDNESS AND TO PROMOTE UNDERSTANDING

by Pedro Zurita

Head of International Relations Department  
National Organization of the Blind, Spain

Those of us who are involved in organizational work for the blind quite frequently write and say that there do exist prejudices about blindness and its consequences. Prejudices are a serious obstacle for the attainment of the true integration of the visually handicapped in the general community. Therefore it is natural that we include among our most cherished aspirations the achievement of a positive understanding and acceptance of our situation by sighted people.

This General Assembly presents us with an exceptional opportunity to do some reflecting on this subject. One would also want to offer at this time valid suggestions with regard to the principles that ought to guide our actions in this specific matter. We know that prejudices and myths about blindness have an intellectual foundation. They can also find their roots in emotions. The most frequent case, however, is that both causes go together. We do not understand blind people because we totally ignore their problems and characteristics or we know them in a very imperfect way. We judge their situation in a negative manner because the loss of visual ability is felt to be a very serious defect. It is therefore extremely difficult to appreciate the true consequences of that reality.

Intellectual misunderstanding derives from ignorance or imperfect knowledge. It may also find an important reinforcement in our abstraction ability, in our need to pigeonhole and to generalize. It is best to remember that every generalization is based on the observation of common features neglecting a whole series of differences. When referring to human beings the dangers of inadequate understanding are enormous.

In many cases we make assertions about a given human group on the basis of limited knowledge we possess about one or two of its members. Thus for example our idea about the blind is formed from our contact with a relative, a working fellow, a neighbour, or that person we meet everyday at the bus stop. This is a vulgar non scientific abstraction. But unfortunately, it is not an unusual phenomenon in our way of building attitudes and behaviours towards the world in general and mankind in particular. Psychology and sociology pretend that their conclusions should be backed by in-depth studies with a number of people large

enough to constitute representative samples. However, the results of their investigations are often misinterpreted and scientists and laymen get from them false ideas. If a comparative study shows that Group X is more intelligent than Group Y the only thing that we can justly infer is that statistically that superiority occurs. We cannot admit however that any member of Group X considers himself automatically for that reason superior to any member of Group Y. I have no doubts that this misinterpretation helps to perpetuate the misunderstanding of sexual and racial differences, of the differences existing in real terms between the persons we name as "able" and those we label as "disabled".

In our writings and conversations we frequently attribute all the responsibility of misunderstanding to the "other"—in this specific case, the sighted. We forget however that the leaders of the organizations of the blind regardless of whether they are blind or sighted, also share in human nature and are consequently in no way free of its vices and errors. Moved by a positive desire to fight against the environmental injustice with regard to a good understanding of blindness, we are excessively prone to simplify and positivize our situation. We talk about the blind as though our personalities were essentially identical and we insist on our potentials and abilities without mentioning our problems and difficulties.

Do you not agree that the exercise of a positive self criticism would be very beneficial? Do you not think that it would be necessary to contribute positively to the achievement not only of a condition of first class citizenship but also a condition of human beings endowed with a strictly individual personality? Do you not consider that the impact of blindness is unique for each individual on account of his or her personal characteristics and as a consequence of the family, environmental, social, political, geographic, historical circumstances? I am not at all intending to minimize the objective difficulties that blindness implies. I am firmly convinced however that important as it is blindness is only one factor among the constellation of features which constitute one's personality. It is not the same whether blindness is total or partial, whether it is from birth or has occurred in childhood, youth, adult life or old age. Its consequences vary according to the attitudes and reactions of the family and of the members of the group with which we are most immediately connected. It is not the same to be blind in a society where a given life philosophy is prevalent or in another ruled by a radically different one. It is not the same to be blind in a community inspired by this or that socio-political practice. It is not the same to have been blind in 1910 or in 1979. And, of course, our physical and intellectual features, our temperament, in a word, our personality, play a decisive role.

Our public relations programmes should therefore always bear in mind that blind people are first and above all human beings with an individual personality, that their abilities vary from one another, that they have the right to succeed in life but also the right to fail, that what they wish is to have the opportunity of self realization, that their ideal is that one day physical and intellectual differences, diversity in skin colour, being a woman or a man, to see or not to see, to have the ability



of walking normally or be compelled to move in a wheelchair should not be in any way points of discrimination. Integration for each and everyone should really be possible by creating suitable conditions so that the enjoyment of social opportunities should depend only on our real individual characteristics. That is an unreachable utopia, many of you will say. However, we should not forget that if we do not set ourselves ideal targets it is very unlikely that we will find the necessary moral strength to work towards the attainment of a society based on a true solidarity. This should eliminate the all too prevalent notion of competition in which some get lost and others fall by the wayside.

I am totally aware that we have to be realistic and that we have to find ways and means to improve our situation here and now. It will often be necessary to adjust ourselves to the circumstances that surround us. I also think however that it is desirable to have a certain degree of healthy dissatisfaction, that it is essentially a certain creative tension which makes human progress genuinely possible. It is also realistic to assert that if the efforts in the field of education and rehabilitation are not combined with a determined action to obtain more just laws, more communal attitudes and behaviours, we will only be serving a minority, an elite and integration will have an unjustly limited value. We would fail in the attainment of our objectives if we perform in such a way that socialization forces the individuals to become stereotypes instead of fostering the development of their potentials without terms of comparison. There is no reason to abandon our aim of achieving equality but we should insist much more on our right to be different.

**PROFESSIONAL SESSION 2**  
**COOPERATION WITHIN BLIND WELFARE**

Thursday morning, August 2, 1979

Chairman: Mr. Arne Husveg, Norway

**REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE FOR STIMULATING  
ORGANIZATIONAL COOPERATION**

by Arne Husveg, Chairman

The Committee was established after the last General Assembly of the WCWB with the following members:

Arne Husveg, Norway, *Chairman*  
Leonard de Wulf, Belgium  
Ron Chandran-Dudley, Singapore  
Alassane Fall, Senegal  
Helmut Pielasch, G.D.R.  
Mohammed Rajhi, Tunisia  
Franz Sonntag, F.R.G.

The main tasks of the committee were:

- (a) to promote cooperation between organizations of and for the blind;
- (b) to establish organizations of or for the blind in countries where these organizations do not exist.

The Committee has held one meeting in Algiers, November 23-25, 1976 where a working programme was drawn up. A detailed report from the meeting was presented at the meeting of the Executive Committee of the WCWB at Riyadh in March 1977. I quote from the report:

“The Committee decided that the first step must be to make a reliable survey to ascertain which countries have organizations for the blind, of the blind, or both, and which countries lack such organizations altogether. With this in view, a questionnaire will be circulated to the member organizations of the WCWB and the IFB and to governments in countries where neither of the two world organizations have affiliates. On the basis of the results of this first survey a more detailed questionnaire will be circulated with emphasis on the particular problems in the individual countries.

“The Committee is of the opinion that concrete measures should be taken as soon as sufficient material is available from these question-

naires. Such measures should include:

- (a) Persuading governments to include in their working programmes proposals for the social, cultural and occupational rehabilitation of the blind,
- (b) Urging the practical participation of international organizations and groups of cooperating states by the provision of finance and expertise for projects within blind welfare,
- (c) Promoting understanding and cooperation between organizations of the blind and for the blind in each individual country both for short-term projects and on a permanent basis,
- (d) Taking steps to establish organizations in countries where no blind organizations exist. The Committee is aware that the meeting of Honorary Officers in Helsinki, 1976, decided that the Committee's mandate should include the establishment of organizations both for and of the blind. However, bearing in mind the limited resources of the Committee—both practical and financial—it is felt that priority must be given to the promotion of organizations of the blind. In the case of a government showing interest in taking an active part in establishing a national blind organization, such an initiative should be welcomed."

As emphasized in my report to the Executive Committee, I have felt far from confident about the wisdom of carrying through an active policy according to the mandate of the Committee at a time when strenuous efforts are being made by many persons and organizations to promote an amalgamation of the two world organizations within blind welfare. An active policy would, in my opinion, entail visits by the chairman or other members of the Committee to different countries and concrete steps towards establishing blind organizations in these countries. In the existing situation such initiatives could easily lead to conflicts with existing agencies and the good work of increasing understanding and cooperation between the two world organizations might easily be jeopardized.

After much heart-searching I therefore came to the conclusion that the cause would be best served by a policy of "wait and see" until the next General Assembly of the WCWB. I would stress that this decision is entirely the responsibility of the chairman and does not necessarily reflect the views of the other members of the Committee. I may add that the latest moves by the Scandinavian blind organizations and the presidia of the European committee of the two world organizations towards the achievement of one world organization of the blind, has made me feel even more justified in my attitude.

The next Executive Committee of the WCWB will have to decide whether the Committee on Stimulating Organizational Cooperation should be dissolved or continue under a new chairman. Other decisions made at this General Assembly will probably have a strong bearing on the conclusions reached by the executive committee in this respect. If it is decided that the Committee should continue its work, it is my strong opinion that the mandate should be promoted with caution and restraint.

## **SUBMISSION OF JOINT WCWB/IFB OFFICERS RESOLUTION**

The Honorary Officers of IFB and WCWB who met in Bad Berleburg on February 27-28, 1979 recommend for adoption to the General Assemblies of both Organizations in 1979 the following resolution:

### **Preamble**

This General Assembly **RECOGNIZES** the valuable contribution that has been and is being made in many countries to improve the conditions of the blind through the operation of programs by organizations for the blind. It also appreciates the initiatives that have been taken by individuals and organizations for the blind to educate and train blind people to be useful and independent citizens.

It also **RECOGNIZES** that the historical development of private initiatives has made blind people aware of their own conditions resulting in the creation of independent and influential organizations of the blind.

This General Assembly further **ACCEPTS** that both organizations of and for the blind need and have a claim to a forum for an international exchange of knowledge and experience.

This General Assembly also **RECOGNIZES** that in some parts of the world the creation of viable organizations of blind people still is extremely difficult, and in such cases the operation of services of benefit for blind people by organizations for the blind should be maintained and encouraged. It is its firm belief that in all parts of the world every effort must be made to establish responsible organizations of blind people, and that all organizations for the blind should be called on to stimulate the development of such Bodies and agree to full participation of competent blind people at the policy making and management levels of the organizations for the blind.

This General Assembly **IS OF THE OPINION** that the development in most countries has reached the stage where the blind people can effectively participate in determining programs for their own betterment.

This General Assembly therefore **REGRETS** the fact that in some countries there is little cooperation between organizations for the blind and the organizations of the blind. Frequently, the organizations for the blind are so dominant that an organization of the blind can neither be created nor function effectively. It strongly believes, that there should be established at all levels a permanent, cooperative and effective relationship between them, as they exist today, as both have great merit and to a great extent are interdependent.

This General Assembly therefore **DECLARES**, that the development has resulted in undesirable difficulties thus creating misunderstanding, confusion and duplication of efforts on the international as well as the regional level, with the consequential dissipation of resources.

In order to avoid these difficulties this General Assembly **AGREES** to convene the 1984 Assembly as a joint meeting of IFB and WCWB



at which the formation of a new organization should be discussed with the objective to represent the interests of both organizations of and for the Blind. One of its major purposes should be to ensure the development in all countries of mature, responsible, independent blind people who will be given a maximum opportunity for determining the policies and administering the programs which directly affect their lives. This new Body shall be constituted in such a way that, at least half the number of the national representatives must be nominated by the national organizations of the blind.

In pursuance of the above statements this General Assembly makes the following recommendations:

- (1) that the General Assemblies of the two organizations to be held in 1979 agree that the General Assemblies to be held in 1984 should take the form of a joint IFB/WCWB-meeting.
- (2) that at the General Assemblies 1979 there should be created a joint working group of 3 representatives of each organization under the chairmanship of a person to be agreed by both sides. This working group shall be responsible for submitting to the two Executive Committees which shall meet simultaneously in 1981:
  - (a) draft program for the joint 1984 General Assembly.
  - (b) proposals covering the future relationship between the two organizations, inter alia, draft proposals for a constitution for a new organization, if the idea of such organization is acceptable and approved by the two Assemblies of 1979,
  - (c) study the feasibility of establishing a joint secretariat and possible timing of its creation.
- (3) That the Honorary Officers of IFB and WCWB at the world level until 1984 shall meet jointly from time to time to plan combined activities and events.
- (4) That the Honorary Officers of Regional Committees where such Committees exist, until 1984 shall be recommended to hold joint meetings. It shall be their objective to evolve plans leading to the convening of joint Regional Assemblies and other activities and events.
- (5) That in each member country, where appropriate, national co-ordinating committees must be set up, with representatives from both IFB and WCWB affiliates, with a view to ensuring, inter alia, that wherever possible the national delegations to the WCWB-General Assembly in 1984 shall include representatives nominated by the recognized national organization(s) of the blind.
- (6) That the consultation at all levels between IFB and WCWB shall be strengthened. Should either organization wish to launch any event, activity or campaign, early notice should be given to the other organization so that it may indicate, whether in its view the matter shall be dealt with on the basis of joint action.

Bad Berleburg, February 28, 1979.

*International Federation  
of the Blind*

Fatima Shah

Tom Parker

Abdullah al Ghanim

Franz Sonntag

Leonard de Wulf

*World Council for the Welfare  
of the Blind*

Boris Zimin

Dorina de Gouvêa Nowill

Abdullah al Ghanim

Hideyuki Iwahashi

John C. Colligan

Anders Arnör



## DIALOGUE BETWEEN WCWB AND IFB

by Boris V. Zimin, President, WCWB

The theme of our Sixth General Assembly fits in the best way possible the problem which is under discussion today. The cooperation of the World Council for the Welfare of the Blind and the International Federation of the Blind is the primary and most important prerequisite for promotion of welfare of the blind throughout the world. Five years ago at the WCWB General Assembly in São Paulo many speakers expressed their willingness to have the efforts of the World Council and the International Federation of the Blind brought closer. Over the quinquennium, in my capacity as WCWB President, in cooperation with other Honorary Officers of our Council, I have tried to do my best to implement those wishes. Later on, I shall touch upon our efforts in this area.

Before getting down to express my ideas as to further ways of developing the inter-relationship between WCWB and IFB, I wish to draw your attention to the present situation in the international social movement of the blind. I believe that an objective evaluation of the situation can facilitate a search of possible ways of cooperation.

As you know, at present four international organizations are working in the field of blindness. They are: the International Agency for the Prevention of Blindness (IAPB), the International Council for the Education of the Visually Handicapped (ICEVH), the International Federation of the Blind (IFB) and the World Council for the Welfare of the Blind (WCWB). We can state that two of them—IAPB and ICEVH—have their own specific goals, that is, prevention of blindness and education of the visually handicapped respectively. Both organizations try to achieve their objectives on the basis of the professional activities. The aim of the two other organizations—WCWB and IFB—is the welfare of the blind throughout the world. However, the organizations take a different approach to the achievement of this aim, WCWB is uniting the professional approach (organizations for the blind, experts in the field) and practical experience (organizations of the blind, blind leaders having experience in social work). The IFB approach to the same task is based primarily on utilizing the wide social experience of its members (organizations of the blind).

Cooperation between WCWB and IAPB, WCWB and ICEVH appear to present few problems since each organization has its own tasks that are clearly defined and expressed. From the moment of the establishment of these organizations, we have worked in the spirit of permanent contacts and lasting cooperation. Ways of improving this cooperation can be discussed, but it is not directly concerned with the subject of my paper. At the same time, the fact that two organizations function in parallel trying to achieve the same goal results, to my mind, in complications in international work and causes us to look for some

more adequate forms of cooperation. Meanwhile, we have to proceed from recognizing our personal responsibility for the success of the international social movement of the blind and for more successful solutions of the problems of rehabilitation and integration of millions of the blind in the world.

That is why it is quite appropriate to ask ourselves if it is practical to have two international organizations working in parallel in the field of blindness. Should we bring them closer and combine their efforts? What are the ways of doing that without causing damage to the common cause and to the organizations?

I think that the evaluation of the situation as well as searching for answers to the questions should form the subject of today's discussion.

If we cast a glance at the history of blind welfare, we shall find that at the very beginning it was organizations for the blind, founded primarily by blind people themselves that were set up to promote the welfare of the visually impaired.

We can refer to the Royal National Institute for the Blind in Great Britain, founded over 110 years ago by a Council that consisted of four blind individuals under the chairmanship of Dr. Thomas Armitage.

Over many years, the RNIB has set a fine example for other countries. In fact, the model of the organization was followed by some countries. Nowadays, blind people continue to hold responsible positions on the Executive Council of the Royal National Institute.

The Nippon Lighthouse is one of the largest organizations for the blind in Asia. It was founded in 1952 by the blind leader of social movement of the blind in Japan, Mr. Takeo Iwahashi. He made a most valuable contribution to development of the national blind movement in Japan and to the foundation of the Federation of the Blind.

The founder of the Canadian National Institute for the Blind was Colonel Eddy Baker, well-known to all of us. Under his leadership the Institute promoted education and vocational rehabilitation of the blind in Canada. During the 13 years of his presidency in our World Council, he spared no effort to encourage international activities of the blind. High praise can be given to the Association Valentin Haüy which has been doing a very good job for rehabilitation of the blind in France.

This list can be continued since there are dozens of big organizations for the blind which are playing an important role in education and integration of the blind.

The work of such organizations is based on the joint efforts of visually impaired founders or leaders and professional experience of sighted experts. It should be emphasized that activities of organizations for the blind encouraged the creation and development of the international movement of blind people themselves as well as training visually handicapped leaders.

In the meantime, an historical approach demonstrates that later on organizations of the blind tended to develop very rapidly. This tendency was encouraged by organizations for the blind through the development of economy, science, culture and the media.

At present national organizations of the blind in socialist and Scandinavian countries as well as in some other countries (Federal

Republic of Germany, France, Italy, India, Japan etc.) exercise great influence. It is these organizations which act as go-betweens with their governments and utilize the professional experience and knowledge of sighted experts.

As you will see, associations and unions of the blind in socialist, Scandinavian and other countries also set a fine example of the social movement of the blind.

It follows from the aforementioned that blind welfare can be successful in modern society, as a result of the close cooperation of blind people with sighted professionals.

The experience shows that no grounds for antagonism exist or could appear in relations between organizations of and for the blind.

However, we have to admit with regret that in some countries there are organizations for the blind which ignore organizations of the blind and vice versa—organizations of the blind ignoring organizations for the blind. I am convinced that this situation is not normal, it damages welfare and integration of the blind.

As you may notice, the aforementioned is reflected in the draft resolution submitted by the Honorary Officers of WCWB and IFB to the General Assembly.

Aims of organizations of the blind in modern society are defined in the Draft Resolution in the following way:

“This General Assembly also recognizes that in some parts of the world the creation of viable organizations of blind people is extremely difficult, and in such cases the operation of services of benefit for blind people by organizations for the blind should be maintained and encouraged. It is the firm belief of the General Assembly that in all parts of the world every effort must be made to establish responsible organizations of blind people, and that all organizations for the blind should be called on to stimulate the development of such bodies and agree to full participation of competent blind people at the policy making and management levels of the organizations for the blind.”

We, the Honorary Officers earnestly believe that such a definition gives a positive direction for further development of the international social movement of the blind.

I would like to review very briefly the situation within WCWB. Some people are firmly convinced that WCWB is “an organization for the blind”, while IFB is “an organization of the blind”. As a result, antagonistic ideas have developed in regard to both organizations. In practice, every year more and more organizations of the blind join the World Council. Moreover, all the executives in WCWB such as the Honorary Officers (excluding Honorary Secretary General and Honorary Treasurer), regional and almost all standing committee chairmen are blind people and many of them are leaders of national organizations of the blind in their own countries.

At present, organizations of and for the blind from 73 countries are national members of WCWB. Over 60 per cent out of these have representatives of organizations of the blind among their national delegates. The overwhelming majority of member countries of the World Council are represented only by organizations for the blind—



there are just no organizations of the blind at all. We, in the World Council are going to urge all national delegations to include representatives of organizations of the blind.

Thus, you can see that today the WCWB policy is positively influenced by national organizations of the blind and by blind leaders. The strengthening of this tendency is quite obvious. In the present situation the idea about WCWB as an organization only "for" the blind is absolutely wrong.

In the other hand, the organizations for the blind which are members of WCWB regard the aims and goals of the Council with deep understanding and contribute professional knowledge to the development of the welfare of the blind. All this creates a favourable basis for the comprehensive activities of the World Council for the benefit of the blind throughout the world.

So far as the relationship between WCWB and IFB is concerned, I am anxious to emphasize that over the last years, and especially after the Fifth General Assembly in Sao Paulo, the World Council has been constantly manifesting its earnest willingness to cooperate with IFB. We initiated joint meetings of the Honorary Officers of both organizations which have become a part of our routine work now. The meetings are convened to discuss general problems and to exchange views and information. Both organizations jointly organized the International Conference on the Situation of Blind Women that was a great success.

This year of 1979 has been announced as the International Year of the Child. Both organizations signed an appeal to the Heads of Governments of all countries on the improvement of the social situation of the blind. It gives me great pleasure to inform you that the response to the appeal was very inspiring. I hope that it will help the national organizations to more actively participate in programmes for the prevention of blindness and integration of the blind in their countries. Nowadays the joint committee that was established for organizing the International Conference of Blind Women has made great progress. The European committees of the World Council and the International Federation of the Blind have developed positive cooperation.

I earnestly regret that not everything that we have been doing has contributed to the development of our cooperation. For instance, the initiative of the WCWB Asian Regional Committee on cooperation at the regional level was declined by the IFB Asian Regional Committee.

I am aware that the format of our joint efforts is probably far from being perfect and is not utilized to the full extent, but I do not see any obstacles that can prevent us from developing and expanding our cooperation.

Being conscious of a great responsibility for the further development of cooperation between WCWB and IFB and taking into account the fact that constructive suggestions which could facilitate the development of a closer relationship between our organizations should be submitted to the next General Assemblies of both organizations, the WCWB and IFB Honorary Officers authorized a working group consisting of Messrs. A. Al-Ghanim, A. Arnör, E. Boulter, T. Parker and F. Sonntag to prepare their proposals on the problem in question. I am anxious to

take this opportunity to express my sincere thanks to these gentlemen for the careful study of the problem and the most valuable proposal that laid a basis for the Draft Resolution approved by the joint meeting of WCWB and IFB Honorary Officers in Bad Berleburg (Federal Republic of Germany) on February 28, 1979.

Recommendations elaborated by the working group were considered and approved by the Honorary Officers as the basis for closer cooperation between the two world organizations which would provide an opportunity for creating a single harmonious world body in future. The Honorary Officers also studied recommendations submitted by organizations of the blind from Scandinavian countries.

The Honorary Officers fully appreciated these documents and decided to utilize the most reasonable suggestions in a Draft Resolution on further cooperation and development of closer relationship between WCWB and IFB based on both documents. The Draft Resolution is put forward for your consideration at today's session. I am anxious to emphasize that the joint meeting of the WCWB and IFB Honorary Officers was held in the spirit of mutual understanding and great responsibility for the future unity of the international social movement of the blind and interests of the visually impaired throughout the world. The document under discussion was unanimously approved by Honorary Officers of WCWB and IFB. I am eager to avail myself of the opportunity to express my great appreciation to our German friends—President Franz Sonntag and his colleagues—for everything they did to make our meeting in Bad Berleburg successful.

One of the policies of the World Council has always been a willingness to encourage and support representatives of both organizations of and for the blind, involving them in the development and running of all services for the blind on national, regional and international levels. This policy is followed in the majority of WCWB member countries, and it can be still in accordance with cultural, social and political conditions typical of each country.

It follows from the WCWB's experience and practice of many years that only the joint efforts of two historically established forms of blind welfare, i.e. organizations of and for the blind can achieve progress in the comprehensive integration of blind individuals. Still I earnestly believe that some privileges should be provided by the constitution for national organizations of the blind as it is stated in the Draft Resolution.

The area of blind welfare is not vast. A small number of leaders is quite sufficient. Financial resources are limited. It is common knowledge that these are the factors that affect our national and international work.

I feel that I am expressing the views of all the participants if I say that we should strive to strengthen our efforts by joint action and not undermine them by antagonistic actions. This is the only way to implement our objective of improving the welfare of blind people all over the world.

## REPORT ON CO-OPERATION BETWEEN WCWB AND IFB

by Dr. Fatima Shah

First and foremost I would like to express my sincere thanks and appreciation to the President and Programme Committee of WCWB for inviting me to the Sixth General Assembly of this world organization and giving me the opportunity of speaking on a subject which is of significance and importance to both IFB and WCWB, i.e. cooperation between the two organizations which today is accepted by everyone to be vitally important in the larger and better interest of the blind people of the world.

I shall be discussing this subject both from the point of view of the International Federation of the Blind, as I have had the honour of being its President during the last five years, and in my personal capacity as a pioneer worker in the self-help movement of blind people both nationally and internationally. I consider it necessary to begin by commenting on some of the points made by my distinguished colleague, Mrs. Boris Zimin, President of the World Council for the Welfare of the Blind in his paper on cooperation which has been prepared with great care and ability.

While elaborating on the international social movement of blind people he has mentioned that out of the four organizations working in the field, IFB and WCWB have a common goal, viz. blind welfare. While I totally agree with him in the broader sense of the term "blind welfare", I would like to clarify the reason why two world organizations with the same goal are in existence. This brings me to the events leading to the formation of IFB. It was the need of the blind people of the developing countries to participate in their own welfare work internationally—participation which was denied to them in the developing world by the strong and dominant organization for the welfare of the blind. The formation of IFB was an important milestone in the social revolution of blind people of the world, indicating the beginning of an important era of awakening and development through self-help movements for the achievement of their basic right of self-determination which could not be denied to them any longer. The WCWB no doubt has been performing a very important task in the field of blind welfare with substantial and far-reaching effects. We are all aware of the fact that WCWB represents both organizations of and for the blind. Nevertheless, it is equally true that the voice of organized blind people from a large number of the countries of the world was excluded from this forum and still is. The fact has to be faced that the participation of blind people with special reference to the developing world was neglected and needed special impetus and encouragement from this world forum. Its constitution did not ensure the fulfilment of this vital need. They had no mandatory powers to enforce the inclusion of the representatives of blind people from the developing areas of the world in



their respective national delegations. The overlooking of such a vital principle led to the natural consequence of the formation of a parallel international forum—IFB—to fulfil the imperative need of those who founded it.

The procedure adopted by IFB to involve blind people themselves in their progress and development at every level is extremely important. It is true that blind welfare work began with voluntary effort by religious and charitable organizations for the blind which resulted in an increased number of educated blind persons who in turn joined together to form their own organization. Nevertheless the pivotal role in the struggle for the achievement of basic human rights and first class citizenship has been, and is being, played by the organizations of blind people themselves. It is accepted by all of us today that both types of organizations of and for the blind have their distinctive role to play towards the welfare and advancement of the blind community. It is for the blind people to voice their needs and requirements, determine the priority of services to be established for them; this in turn is the function of the organizations for the welfare of the blind.

Turning to the subject of cooperation it is imperative to recognize the principle that cooperation between any two parties can only run smoothly and effectively if it is based on terms of equality and from a position of strength on both sides. To illustrate this point I shall give a concrete example. In the beginning IFB was small and weak and struggling to stand on its own feet independently. From this point of weakness it turned to the strong and well established WCWB for help and cooperation. In 1969, when the first convention of IFB was due, the late Dr. Tenbroek, Founder President of IFB, made an offer to the then President of WCWB for a joint assembly of both the organizations. The offer was turned down. However, this refusal for a joint assembly was a blessing in disguise for IFB at that time as it created a challenge for independent action for IFB which it accepted. The first convention of IFB was organized in Colombo, Sri Lanka, in October 1969 which was a great success. IFB has never looked back after that and has gained in strength and stature ever since.

Gradually as time passed the conditions became more favourable and conducive to cooperation between the two organizations.

This time the initiative was taken by the World Council for the Welfare of the Blind. In March 1975 a letter was received from the President of WCWB in which he had extended an offer of cooperation to the IFB in blind welfare work. This offer was accepted by the President of IFB in the honest and sincere belief that such cooperation between the two world organizations working in the field would be in the best interests of blind people, especially those from the developing regions. This move was fully approved by the majority of the members of the Executive Board as well as a number of IFB affiliates.

The procedures adopted at the joint meeting of the Honorary Officers of IFB and WCWB in Paris, in May 1975, to guide this cooperation were:

(a) All joint committees to have equal representation and co-chairmen,

- (b) All deputations to the world bodies to be made jointly by the two Presidents and if necessary equal representation from each organization.

The first cooperative venture was the Belgrade Conference on the Situation of Blind Women in which both the organizations supplemented each other's efforts in making the conference a success. While WCWB did most of the spade work for this conference, as IFB joined in later, it was through the efforts of IFB that participation of blind women from Asia and Africa was made possible.

The next important programme in which the two organizations cooperated was the Leadership Training Seminar held in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia in November 1975. This was followed in April 1979 by a similar Seminar in Lusaka, Zambia. These cooperative efforts had far-reaching benefits not only to the blind people but to the organizations of the blind as well.

This training was very valuable and fulfilled the vital need at that time for our blind leaders who attended these Seminars. The value and importance of this training programme is immense when considered in the light of the fact that blind people are organizing themselves in Asia and Africa and as such are in urgent need of guidance and training in the field.

It was at the Kuala Lumpur Seminar that the foundation was laid for the East Asia Regional Committee of IFB and similar steps were taken at the Lusaka Seminar for the formation of the Africa Regional Committee of IFB. Furthermore, potential blind leaders from countries like Lesotho, Botswana and Swaziland, where organizations of blind people do not exist as yet, have been motivated, after being equipped with the necessary training at the Lusaka Seminar to establish such organizations in their respective countries on their return.

However, the cooperation on national and regional level in the developing world is not what the leaders of both the organizations would desire it to be. The most important cause for this in the developing countries is the fact that organizations of the blind are still in the initial stages of development and as such are mostly ignored by the well established organizations for the blind who are not yet prepared to give up their domination in the field.

On the other hand organizations of the blind are not prepared to cooperate on any other terms but those of equality. In my opinion it is at this level that maximum effort by the leaders of WCWB and IFB is required to create conditions conducive to a relationship of harmony and cooperation between their respective national affiliates. This is where the efforts of IFB are required to strengthen the organizations of the blind so that they are able to cooperate from a position of equality. The WCWB should also motivate its affiliates to include representatives of the organized blind on their Executive Committees in order to create an atmosphere of mutual trust and confidence. This in turn will lead to the desired cooperation at the regional level. Thus the process of cooperation has to be made effective at the grass-root level in order to achieve our goal. Details of further development in cooperation between

the two organizations are given in the Bad Berleburg resolution dated February 28, 1979 which has already been distributed to all the affiliates of both organizations. Therefore, I shall not pursue the matter here.

The third convention of IFB has now concluded. The Bad Berleburg resolution has not been adopted by the General Assembly. Instead, another resolution has been adopted on future cooperation between WCWB and IFB.

### **Preamble**

The members of the Resolutions Committee have studied in detail the Bad Berleburg Declaration circulated by the Honorary Officers to the IFB and the WCWB, and we have sought the comments of every region of the world, represented at the Third General Assembly of the IFB.

Based on the firm conviction that the organized blind all over the world must never give away the right to determine their own destiny in cooperation with the community, governments, and agencies, and that the autonomy identity and objectives of the IFB must be preserved, the Resolutions Committee recommends the following action to the delegates of the Third General Assembly:

1. The Honorary Officers of IFB should continue their efforts to bring about greater cooperation and collaboration between IFB and WCWB in all areas and at all levels of common concern.
2. The 1979 General Assemblies of the two organizations shall establish a Joint Working Group with three representatives of each organization under the chairmanship of a person to be agreed upon by both sides. This Working Group shall study the feasibility of a joint secretariat and other organizational measures for increased efficiency at reduced cost.

In the light of this resolution three representatives of IFB on the joint working group have already been appointed. The future course of action will depend on the decisions taken at the VIth General Assembly of WCWB after which the joint working group can start functioning under the terms of reference laid down by the two general assemblies. The general assembly is the supreme authority and we shall abide by its decisions and work towards their implementation. As far as IFB is concerned cooperation in all fields and at all levels with WCWB is fully endorsed by the Third Assembly, as it is already included in the preamble of its constitution. I sincerely hope that we shall be able to adopt effective measures to promote cooperation first and foremost at the national level which is vitally important as a foundation for wider cooperation at other levels. Both IFB and WCWB will have to take concrete steps to build confidence and trust between their respective national affiliates in every country of the world and this refers to all the continents of the world except Europe where there are in existence several countries requiring these measures. I have mentioned this previously in my report and after being informed of the situation in all the countries which were represented at the convention I am fully

convinced that a programme of cooperation at the national level is the first fundamental step which has to be taken by us if overall success in that field is to be achieved. I hope that the decision taken at this Assembly of WCWB will enable us to apply ourselves to this task immediately.

Before concluding this report I wish all success to the Sixth Assembly of WCWB which has chosen "Cooperation" as its theme. I am confident that some useful and practical methods and procedures for co-operation will emerge as a result of their deliberations. I wish all success and God speed to your work.



## BUSINESS SESSION 1

Thursday afternoon, August 2, 1979

### **PRESIDENT'S REPORT ON THE ACTIVITIES OF THE COUNCIL AND THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

The five years which have passed since the Fifth General Assembly in Sao Paulo, August 1974, have been marked by great activity in the World Council for the Welfare of the Blind, its Regional Standing Committees and all national member organizations of and for the blind.

It is well known now that the blind are involved in production processes making their contribution to the material, social and intellectual progress of modern society.

Quite recently it was believed that the total number of blind people in the world was 16 million. However, it was emphasized that the estimate was far from being accurate. At present, we realize that there are 40 million visually handicapped people throughout the world and 80 per cent of them live in developing countries. Moreover, the number of blind will increase unless urgent measures are taken to prevent blindness.

National organizations of and for the blind have very noble objectives, i.e. to involve the visually impaired in the economic and social life of their countries; to draw the attention of governmental and non-governmental agencies to problems of prevention of blindness; training and employment of the blind; through the media to give publicity to possibilities of the visually handicapped; to participate in various programmes of international cooperation for better integration of the blind into the community.

Irrespective of the fact that our General Assembly is not being held in Africa, we recognize that problems of prevention of blindness, social and vocational rehabilitation and integration of the blind in the community are extremely vital for Africa as well as for Asia.

I feel that I can express the earnest hope of all Assembly participants if I say that we are looking forward to the fact that recommendations to be adopted by the General Assembly will draw the attention of governmental and non-governmental agencies in African countries to problems of the blind and facilitate integration of the visually impaired into the community as well as encourage the creation and development of active and powerful organizations of and for the blind in the continent.

This is the reason why the theme of our Assembly—"COOPERATION"—is seen to reflect most adequately our current aims and ways of their implementation.

The Sixth General Assembly will discuss different aspects of co-operation of WCWB and its national members and approve resolutions which will lay the basis for further development of the policy of our organization.

The current state of science, technology and culture presents plenty of opportunities for development of the blind individual's personality. I honestly believe that modern society has all the necessary resources for the evaluation of possibilities of the blind and for extending them a helping hand for social integration. More responsibility is placed, therefore, on all organizations of and for the blind for beneficial co-operation with governmental and non-governmental organizations on national, regional and international levels.

The report on WCWB activities is primarily a review of the work done by its Regional and Standing Committees. The agenda of our Assembly provides that all the participants will be able not only to listen to these reports but also to join in discussions.

Due to this fact and also in view of shortness of time, I shall concentrate upon general policy of the World Council and sum up activities carried out during the time that has passed since the last General Assembly.

It would hardly be an overstatement if I say that the World Council has made further progress over these five years. An increase in the WCWB membership demonstrates a greater popularity of the World Council. Since the last General Assembly many more members have joined the World Council as compared to other quinquennia. Greater responsibility and authority placed on Regional Committees as well as changes in Standing Committee structure have had considerable impact on strengthening of WCWB activities that in their turn have resulted in establishing closer contacts with UN specialized agencies (UNESCO, ILO, WHO, UNICEF, ECOSOC) and better utilization of programmes developed by these agencies for the benefit of blind people and prevention of blindness.

Now we can say with certainty that the foundation of the International Agency for the Prevention of Blindness on the initiative of WCWB and WHO was a most reasonable decision and resulted in consolidating our relationship with WHO and encouraging programmes on prevention of blindness throughout the world.

It is very promising that at present prevention of blindness is included in one of the four international programmes launched by the World Health Organization. The World Council and the IAPB have made their contribution to development and promotion of this programme. I would like to emphasize here that prevention of blindness is still one of the most urgent problems of mankind. Today, we have to admit with bitterness that blindness has still not been eradicated; new cases of blindness spring up in different parts of the world all the time. Much effort on the part of international and national organizations, as well as governments, is needed in order to undermine social and economic roots of blindness. I would like to stress again that treatment of eye diseases and prevention of blindness are most urgent problems



in Africa and Asia. Priority, therefore, must be given to prevention of blindness in the countries in these continents.

Our relationship with the International Labour Organization has continued along a favourable course. The BLINDOC Information Service has been very helpful in collecting and disseminating information on rehabilitation, vocational training and employment of the visually handicapped. BLINDOC has issued over 250 information newsletters during this period. A WCWB representative attended meetings of the UN Interagency Committee. A growing interest of the UN specialized agencies in problems of the handicapped is manifested by the fact that the 28th WHO World Assembly passed a resolution on prevention of blindness and the ILO General Conference adopted a resolution on vocational rehabilitation and social integration of the disabled.

Our traditional contacts with UNESCO have continued. The World Council is taking part in a revision of "World Braille Usage" as well as in the UNESCO Cooperative Action Programme. For its part, UNESCO has consulted the World Council on any problem which is more or less concerned with the blind.

We are very much satisfied with the Resolution on Duty-Free Importation of Technical Aids for the Blind and other Handicapped passed by the UNESCO General Assembly in Nairobi in 1976. An adoption of the resolution has become possible due to the fact that WCWB national members made contact with their own UNESCO delegations and urged them to support the resolution.

Great progress was made by a WCWB representative on the UNESCO Intergovernmental Committee on Copyright. In 1977 upon a decision of the Committee, the World Council was afforded consultative status on the Committee, as a non-governmental organization. It is believed that affiliation to the Committee will contribute to further improvement of braille publications and dissemination of books for the blind in all countries of the world. Mrs. Dorina Nowill, Chairman of our Committee on Cultural Affairs, will review these developments in more detail in her report.

Regular contacts have been established between WCWB and UNICEF. The contacts strengthened as a result of the International Year of the Child in 1979. As you know, a Working Group on the Handicapped Child was set up on the NGO Committee of UNICEF. Our International member, Hellen Keller International, has represented the Council in this organization.

In order to realize the aims of the International Year of the Child, the efforts of the World Council for the Welfare of the Blind, the International Agency on the Prevention of Blindness, the International Council for Education of the Visually Handicapped and the International Federation of the Blind were consolidated both on regional and national levels. It was done for the first time and helped to draw the attention of governmental and public organizations to problems of medical and social assistance to handicapped children as well as the creation of more favourable conditions for their education and re-

habilitation, building of special schools and rehabilitation centres, development of curricula and training programmes.

Today, we can say with certainty that such joint actions are a good pattern to follow in the development of international cooperation between our organizations. It is evident that the position of the World Council has strengthened also in other international governmental and non-governmental organizations—CWOIH for example. These organizations have extended invitations to the World Council to send representatives to their conferences and meetings. Being aware of the great importance of addressing large international gatherings in order to call public attention and give publicity to needs of the blind, we made every effort to find resources for sending our delegates to these conferences. It will take too much time if I mention all these meetings. Suffice it to say that, in all, our representatives have attended over fifty international meetings.

Thus, during the five years the World Council has strengthened and expanded its contacts with the UN specialized agencies and other international governmental and non-governmental organizations. These interrelationships have come into our routine work and can be regarded as a recognition of the World Council as an efficient international body representing blind individuals' interests.

I honestly believe that in future the World Council should develop and expand contacts and beneficial cooperation with governmental and non-governmental organizations in order to take greater care of blind people all over the world.

In the work of the World Council priority is given to Regional and Standing Committees. You will get to know what has been done by the Committees from their reports. I myself have always attached great importance to the Regional Committees as the main link of WCWB.

As a body representing the Council in the region, they maintain contacts with national organizations of the blind and direct efforts for further development of the social movement of the blind. Over the past years the Regional Committees have worked according to long-term plans and succeeded in organizing various important conferences and meetings, increased their membership, altered their Constitutions to fit the WCWB Constitution so that today we have every reason to state that the role of the Regional Committees in the work of the World Council has strengthened to a great extent.

Another essential policy of the World Council is concerned with stimulation of Standing Committees' activities. The present structure of our Standing Committees corresponds most adequately to the general policies of the World Council and they were approved by the São Paulo General Assembly and included in its Resolutions. The Committees have maintained regular contacts with appropriate UN specialized agencies. The Standing Committees set up about 15 sub-committees, working and expert groups for promotion of various projects. As a result a greater number of national members have been involved in the work of the World Council. In this way we tried to implement the wishes expressed by many national organizations, i.e. to take a more significant part in WCWB activities.

The World Council and its Regional and Standing Committees have held many important international conferences on most essential problems of the blind. I would like to mention the most important of these.

The International Congress of the 150th Anniversary of the Braille System, Paris, France, May 1975. Representatives from 22 countries attended the Congress.

The Conference on the Situation of Blind Women, Belgrade, Yugoslavia, November 1975. The Conference was held in co-operation with the IFB and attended by delegates from 37 countries. The Symposium on Early Education of Blind Children, Berlin, GDR, May 1976, with representatives from 52 countries.

The Helen Keller Conference on Services to Deaf-Blind Youths and Adults, New York, USA, September 1977, with delegates from 30 countries of the world.

The Congress of the Latin American Organization for the Blind and Visually Impaired, São Paulo, Brazil, October 1978.

Some theoretical conferences: on Scientific notation for the Blind, Moscow, USSR, March 1977; on Sports for the Blind, Belgrade, Yugoslavia, April 1979; on Computerized Braille, London, Great Britain, May 1979.

Each of these conferences and many others reviewed international experience gained in different areas of work for the blind and outlined practical ways of further development of rehabilitation and integration of the visually handicapped.

I would like to mention here the participation of the World Council in some important international campaigns launched by the United Nations and the World Health Organization. They are: the World Health Day (April 7, 1976) devoted to the prevention of blindness; the International Year of the Child 1979; the International Women's Year, 1977. All national organizations of and for the blind contributed towards the Louis Braille Year 1975, declared by the Fifth General Assembly of WCWB. In the course of all the campaigns, national organizations of and for the blind gave publicity to the aims and policy of the World Council and also joined in different national programmes for improvement of the well-being of the blind population in their countries.

In the near future we are expecting to take an active part in the International Year of the Handicapped in 1981 and the Helen Keller Year 1980.

Our experience of the International Women's Year and the International Year of the Child demonstrates that it is most reasonable to cooperate closely with the International Agency on the Prevention of Blindness, the International Council on Education of the Visually Handicapped and the International Federation of the Blind. Our contacts with these organizations have developed greatly. As a result a joint message to Heads of Governments in all states of the world was sent out, in which it was emphasized that in many countries blind people lived in extreme poverty and eye diseases and blindness were increasing



very rapidly and it was urged to develop special programmes of medical assistance and social and vocational rehabilitation. We have already received replies from many countries and it is believed that national organizations of and for the blind should make the most of these resources.

In view of a great variety of aims and ways of work for the blind, special emphasis is placed on national organizations of the blind.

It is hardly necessary to argue that progress in blind welfare depends primarily on efficiency of organizations of and for the blind, i.e. how efficiently they manage to involve governments in solving problems of the blind and how effectively they are able to make use of resources available in their countries. One of the most urgent problems of the World Council for the Welfare of the Blind is still the creation of powerful, authoritative, cooperatively-minded organizations of the blind in the countries where there are no such organizations.

In my report I do not feel it necessary to go into details as to our relationship with the International Federation of the Blind since the agenda of our General Assembly has provided a special session on the problem. I am anxious to emphasize only one thing here, namely, that following the spirit of the São Paulo General Assembly and being aware of the responsibility to the international social movement of the blind, our World Council has continuously taken a lead to draw closer to and to develop contacts with the International Federation of the Blind. It has become a positive practice to convene joint meetings of the Honorary Officers of both organizations in order to discuss issues of mutual interest and to exchange information. An initiative was taken to develop contacts on the regional level as well. The present forms of our joint work do not seem perfect yet, but I do not see anything that can prevent us from developing and improving the cooperation. No doubt the resolutions of the Sixth General Assembly in Antwerp will serve to improve further cooperation between our organizations.

As you will know, the work of any organization is limited by its resources. Thanks to some voluntary donations as well as the generosity of some national organizations which kindly covered expenses on holding some international meetings, the budget of the World Council has been steady, which gave us an opportunity to increase to some extent subventions to the Regional and Standing Committees and also to finance our necessary administrative expenses. You will find a detailed review of the expenditures as well as a description of the financial situation of the World Council in our Honorary Treasurer's report.

In the next quinquennium it will be necessary to somewhat increase our administrative expenses for the Headquarters and the Secretary General. In view of this fact and also taking into consideration that 40 per cent of our income has been made up of voluntary contributions granted on one occasion only, we may expect a critical financial situation in the World Council. Growing inflation should not be neglected either.

We need, therefore, to find a solution that will enable us, on the one hand, to enhance the financial situation of the Council and, on the other

hand, to create more favourable conditions for involving new members to the WCWB from developing countries. As you will see, the WCWB budget is one of the most urgent and complicated problems which we face at present. The way we shall find to solve the problem will pre-determine the future of the World Council as an international organization. I urge you to give due regard to this problem.

It gives me great pleasure to let you know that the activities of the World Council are highly appreciated and recognized by the international public. On the occasion of the 25th Jubilee of the World Council the Institut International de Promotion et de Prestige\* awarded the WCWB with the International Humanitarian Medal.

In conclusion, I would like to mention that in contrast to previous years, WCWB Honorary Officers' meetings have been held not less than once or twice a year during this period. The meetings considered most important and urgent problems of WCWB which resulted in greater responsibility and activity of the WCWB Honorary Officers and have had a positive impact on the work of the World Council and its constituting bodies.

I am anxious to express my sincere thanks to the Honorary Officers, Chairmen of the Regional and Standing Committees, and to all the individuals who took up our tasks with understanding and contributed to their implementation.

I am confident that the cooperative spirit which has been formed in our organization by the Sixth General Assembly is a vivid demonstration of the fact that joint efforts can encourage the international social movement of the blind and further develop the work of the World Council.

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\* International Institute of Promotion and Prestige.



## SECRETARY GENERAL'S REPORT ON MEMBERSHIP

At the conclusion of the Fifth World Assembly in São Paulo, the World Council had 59 National Members. Since then, two countries, Greece and Sudan, have been expelled from membership because of non-payment of membership fees. One country, Tunisia, has withdrawn its membership. Fifteen countries have joined the World Council as National Members, out of which four are re-affiliated. These are Ethiopia, Kenya, Korea and Mexico. The eleven new National Members are Algeria, Argentina, Cameroon, Costa Rica, Ecuador, El Salvador, Fiji, Iceland, Niger, Oman and Uruguay. During the past quinquennium, Ghana regained full National Membership but was obliged to revert again to the status of Associate Member owing to lack of funds. Two countries, Colombia and South Africa, have increased their delegations from two to four representatives because of the rise of population. This makes a total of 73 member countries, with altogether 206 National delegates.

Twenty-eight institutions or individuals have joined the World Council as Associate Members during the period under review, making a total to date of 67 Associate Members in 33 countries.

The number of International Members is unchanged. The four we have are the Helen Keller International, the Royal Commonwealth Society for the Blind, the Christoffel-Blindenmission, and the International Services for the Blind from the United States of America.

The Constitution of the World Council was amended at the São Paulo General Assembly, providing for a new kind of membership, that of Sponsoring Members. Four companies have been admitted as Sponsoring Members. They are Clarke and Smith International, U.K., the Swiss watch manufacturers A. Raymond S.A., Canon Company, Japan, and Miyake Traffic Safety Research Centre in Japan. The latter company has recently reverted to Associate Membership.

Finally, as we learnt during the opening ceremony, four of our Honorary Life Members, Dr. Charles Hedkvist, Mr. John Jarvis, Don Ignacio Satrustegui and Mrs. Queenie Captain, have passed away since we last met in São Paulo, leaving us with five Honorary Life Members. They are Monsieur Henri Amblard, France; Mr. Eric T. Boulter, U.K.; Mr. Hans C. Seierup, Denmark; and Mr. John C. Colligan, U.K.

## REPORT OF THE HONORARY TREASURER OF WCWB FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31st DECEMBER 1978, AND FOR THE QUINQUENNium 1974-1979

In accordance with previous practice, the attached accounts are for the fourth year of the quinquennium (ending 31st December 1978), and the Quinquennial Report includes the last year of the previous quinquennium (1974). This is occasioned by the fact that the General Assembly invariably takes place *before* the conclusion of the financial year.

It will be noted that certain important changes have taken place in our accounts since the São Paulo General Assembly: firstly, that the New York Account was closed down and its balances transferred to London and Paris respectively on 31st December 1974; secondly, that a Dollar Deposit Account was opened in London; and thirdly, that the small Imprest Account in Paris was merged in 1977 with the normal Franc Account. These steps have led to a simplification of our accounting procedures and also allowed us to take maximum advantage of the favourable interest rates obtaining both for pounds and dollars on the London money market.

It will be recollected that in my final Report to the São Paulo General Assembly, I indicated that without a powerful injection of additional financial support it was unlikely that we could continue to be solvent for more than a few months of 1975. Thanks to the pledges made by several member countries at, or immediately following, the last General Assembly, we were assured of an additional annual income of some \$25,000 which, together with the recruitment of Sponsoring Members and additional Representative and Associate Members, has enabled us despite continued world inflation to meet our increasing commitments and to enable us to start the next quinquennium with some reasonable confidence.

I should like at this stage in my report to pay a tribute, which I am sure will be endorsed by the Executive Committee and the General Assembly, to the fifteen member countries and organizations which fulfilled their promises of special donations as well as to many individuals in our organization who secured for us new Sponsoring, Representative or Associate Members.

Comparing the figures available to us at the last General Assembly with the attached summary of accounts, it will be seen that, whereas at 31st December 1973 our total balances were \$21,059, these had increased by 31st December 1978 to \$75,333, which is only slightly less than had been estimated in my report to the Honorary Officers and Finance Committee in April 1978. On the face of it, this may seem a very satisfactory situation but if one remembers the heavy expenditure which is likely to fall on us as a consequence of the General Assembly, particularly as a result of the last minute necessity of changing the

venue, we shall be left with a pitifully small reserve with which to commence the 1980-84 quinquennium, especially if it is appreciated that the annual rate of inflation is likely to continue or increase for some years ahead.

It will be necessary before the conclusion of the General Assembly to consider the way in which our organization should be financed following the expiry of the current financial year. In my report to the Honorary Officers and Finance Committee for the year ended 31st December 1977, I suggested four points for consideration. These were:

- (1) A certain increase in subscription rates (which have remained constant for seven years) is inevitable, if only partly to meet world inflation.
- (2) A method must be worked out by which we can abandon the present "begging bowl" to the wealthier organizations and yet at the same time enable developing countries either to become or to remain members of our World Council.
- (3) A realistic contribution will have to be made towards the expense of the Secretary General's Office. (The present \$5,000 annually is, by present day standards, totally unrealistic).
- (4) It must be agreed as to what is the precise role of the organization in the development of work for the blind internationally. Should it be by grant-aiding selected projects or by developing its administrative structure to maximum effectiveness? Or should it be a combination of both?

At the meetings of the Honorary Officers held in Osaka and Bad Berleberg these points were accepted by all concerned and preliminary approval was given to outline proposals which will be considered in detail by the pre-Assembly meetings of the Finance Committee and the Executive. A report will be presented at the first Business Session.

Returning to the 1979 Cash Statement, I am glad to say that as far as our available balances are concerned they are currently invested on the London money market at satisfactory rates of interest varying between 10 and 12 per cent. The same applies to our Helen Keller Deaf-Blind Fund which, despite a number of calls upon it over the past five years, still stands at rather more than the original bequest.

The balance of the Aid to Developing Countries Fund will be virtually extinguished as a result of travel grants made in connection with this Assembly.

We are under a constitutional obligation to have our accounts audited during the quinquennium and the attached accounts are duly certified. I should like to record our thanks to Madame Szwerebrot-Estienne, Certified Public Accountant Auditor, for having audited our Paris Accounts and to Mr. M. S. Blundell, FCA, for having audited our London Accounts and for having undertaken the certification of the Consolidated Accounts for the period ending 31st December 1978. We are most grateful to them both.

I should also like to record my own thanks to the Royal National Institute for the Blind for continuing to grant me office facilities and

secretarial help. I would particularly mention their Chief Accountant, Mr. R. C. Doe, for his help in keeping our books and preparing our yearly accounts during the past ten years, and to Miss Carol Lay for her valuable assistance in secretarial work.

London, June 22, 1979

J. C. COLLIGAN  
*Honorary Treasurer*

**WORLD COUNCIL FOR THE WELFARE OF THE BLIND  
SUMMARY CASH STATEMENT**

**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31st DECEMBER 1978**

GENERAL ACCOUNT			
	PARIS US \$	LONDON US \$	TOTAL US \$
<b>Balances in hand, 1st January 1978</b> (Schedule 1) ... ..	2,233	60,799	63,032
<b>Add: Receipts:</b>			
Membership Fees ... ..	31,430	9,176	40,606
Special Contributions ... ..	4,127	16,288	20,415
Donations ... ..		210	210
Interest ... ..		3,684	3,684
Contributions to Asian Conference ... ..		5,326	5,326
Miscellaneous ... ..	44	6	50
	37,834	95,489	133,323
<b>Less: Payments:</b>			
Administration Expenses ... ..	39,796	5,064	44,860
Travel:			
Hon. Officers ... ..		4,240	4,240
Deaf-Blind Committee ... ..		1,354	1,354
Sports Committee ... ..		1,626	1,626
Asian Conference and Committee ... ..		7,340	7,340
Miscellaneous ... ..		40	40
	39,796	19,664	59,460
	( - 1,962)	75,825	73,863
Transfers ... ..	+ 3,920	- 3,920	
Differences on Exchange ... ..	+ 110		+ 110
Adjustment of balances at 1st January 1978 to Exchange Rates at 31st December 1978	+ 116	+ 1,244	+ 1,360
<b>Balances in hand, 31st December 1978</b> (Schedule 2) ... ..	2,184	73,149	75,333

(Signed) J. C. COLLIGAN, *Hon. Treasurer*

**Auditor's Report to the Members of the World Council for the Welfare of the Blind**

- I have audited the records of the Council maintained in London and am satisfied that the column headed London on the Summary Cash Statement above correctly records the transactions by the Hon. Treasurer's Office in London during the year ended 31st December 1978, and Schedule 2 the balances with London Banks at the 31st December 1978.
- I have had presented to me Accounts for the Paris Office certified correct by Madame Szwerbrot-Estienne, a Certified Public Accountant, and I am satisfied that the Summary Cash Statement taken as a whole correctly represents the combined transactions of the two offices for the year ended 31st December 1978.

(Signed) M. S. BLUNDELL,  
*Chartered Accountant,  
Hon. Auditor*



**WORLD COUNCIL FOR THE WELFARE OF THE BLIND**  
**SCHEDULES TO THE SUMMARY CASH STATEMENT**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31st DECEMBER 1978**

**SCHEDULE 1—Balances at 1st January 1978**

	PARIS US \$	LONDON US \$	TOTAL US \$
<b>Paris:</b> Dollar a/c ... ..	1,098		1,098
French Franc a/c fr. 5,318.63 ... ..	1,135		1,135
<b>London:</b> Current a/c ( - £36.88) ...		( - 71)	( - 71)
Deposit a/c—£19.70 ... ..		38	38
Special Deposit a/c £15,000		28,755	28,755
Dollar Deposit a/c ... ..		32,077	32,077
	2,233	60,799	63,032

Exchange rates at 1st January 1978: £1 sterling = US \$ 1.917  
US \$1.00 = French francs 4.687

**SCHEDULE 2—Balances at 31st December 1978**

<b>Paris:</b> Dollar a/c ... ..	1,860		1,860
French Franc a/c fr. 1,375.51 ... ..	324		324
<b>London:</b> Current a/c ( - £842.92) ...		( - 1,686)	( - 1,686)
Deposit a/c £20.82 ... ..		42	42
Special Deposit a/c £15,000		30,000	30,000
Dollar Deposit a/c ... ..		44,793	44,793
	2,184	73,149	75,333

Exchange rates at 31st December 1978: £1 sterling = US \$2.00  
US \$1.00 = French francs 4.25

**WORLD COUNCIL FOR THE WELFARE OF THE BLIND**  
**HELEN KELLER DEAF-BLIND FUND**

**Receipts and Payments Account for the year ended 31st December 1978**

					US \$
<b>Balance in hand at 1st January 1978</b> ... ..	...	...	...	...	24,988
<b>Add:</b> Interest received during the year ... ..	...	...	...	...	1,461
<b>Balance in hand at 31st December 1978</b> ... ..	...	...	...	...	26,449

**AID TO DEVELOPING COUNTRIES FUND**

**Receipts and Payments Account for the year ended 31st December 1978**

					US \$
<b>Balance in hand at 1st January 1978</b> ... ..	...	...	...	..	3,076
<b>Add:</b> Subscription received during the year ... ..	...	...	...	...	102
Interest received during the year ... ..	...	...	...	...	161
					3,339
<b>Less:</b> Secretarial expenses ... ..	...	...	...	...	440
<b>Balance in hand at 31st December 1978</b> ... ..	...	...	...	...	2,899

**NOTE:** Balances are held in Pounds Sterling and have been converted to US Dollars at the rate of 2 US \$ equals £1 Sterling.

## REPORT OF THE CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

by W. Stein

International President of ICEVH

The "Consultative Committee on Education" of WCWB has grown into a worldwide link of educators of the blind, and since 1972 it is known as "International Council for Education of the Visually Handicapped". Recently there has been considerable discussion as to how this organization relates to WCWB; in order to clarify this point it seems necessary to give a brief account of its history:

From 1873 onwards, a number of national and international gatherings of workers and educators concerned with the blind had been held in various European countries and in the USA, but no permanent international organization had resulted to serve either adults or children. To change this situation, an International Conference of Workers for the Blind was held at Merton College, Oxford, in August 1949, which resulted in the formation of the World Council of Workers for the Blind (1951) and the International Conference of Educators of Blind Youth during a conference in Holland (1952).

The World Council for the Welfare of the Blind was created in 1951 and accepted the International Conference of Educators of Blind Youth as its Education Committee, thus assuring a smooth joint working arrangement between WCWB and ICEBY. The difference to the other WCWB Committees was that ICEBY had its own constitution and appointed its own officers. The constitution stipulated quinquennial meetings of ICEBY, and during the following years, they took place in Oslo/Norway (1957), in Hanover/West Germany (1962), in Watertown, Mass./USA (1967) where the word "Conference" was changed to "Council" to avoid confusion in reference to the organization and its regular meetings, in Madrid/Spain (1972), after which the name was changed to "International Council for Education of the Visually Handicapped" (ICEVH), and in Paris/France (1977).

In order to erase any doubts over the relationship between ICEVH and WCWB, I would like to confirm that I and the members of the Executive Committee of ICEVH still consider WCWB as the parent body of ICEVH. It is our strong desire to retain the status "Consultative Committee on Education" of WCWB, as we believe that such close affiliation contributes not only to the effectiveness of our two organizations, but is also beneficial to our mutual efforts to provide better services to the visually handicapped. To secure the strong ties between WCWB and ICEVH, a proposal to amend the constitution of ICEVH will be made at the next Quinquennial Conference to the effect that WCWB is assured a permanent representation on the Executive Committee of ICEVH.

At the Paris Quinquennial Conference in 1977, a significant change of the Constitution of ICEVH was made: Recognizing the different needs in different parts of the world, the Executive Committee decided to regionalize the activities of ICEVH. Subsequently, in addition to the International President and Vice-President, seven Regional Presidents were elected for the following regions:

Africa  
Europe  
Far East  
Latin America  
Middle East  
North America  
Oceania

This proved to be a very beneficial and effective move, as we can see a distinct increase of promotional activities in educational affairs for the visually handicapped at regional levels. The following is a brief summary of the various activities of ICEVH since my election as International President in 1977. At this point, I would like to pay tribute to my predecessor, Dr. Jeanne Kenmore, under whose competent and vigorous leadership ICEVH has flourished in many aspects. She has in particular promoted teacher training in many parts of the world, and during her term of office, three Regional Conferences were conducted in Singapore, Malaysia and Yugoslavia. Many more countries became interested in ICEVH, and subsequently 78 of them were represented at the 1977 Conference. In addition, 350 individual members were recorded.

Considerable efforts to promote ICEVH activities were made in the regions of Far East (Regional President Mr. William Brohier), Latin America (Miss Susana Crespo) and Oceania (Mr. Keith Watkins). In the Far East, Mr. Brohier organized a regional meeting in Penang in February, 1978. Miss Crespo conducted a regional course for teachers of ICEVH in the Latin American Region in August/September 1978 and organized a regional meeting in Guatemala in May 1979. Since 1977, she has published and distributed a total of 13 booklets on education of the visually handicapped in the whole region. Mr. Watkins held three regional meetings of the Oceania Committee in January, May and June of 1978. In Europe (Mr. Michael Colborne Brown), special efforts were made to organize aid measures for developing countries. In this region, substantial funds were made available in support of needy programmes in the Third World, and a strong nucleus of experts was formed, many of whom have already assisted in overseas training programmes. North America (Dr. Max Woolly) is planning a regional conference for 1980. Unfortunately, no meetings were conducted in the African and Middle East Regions owing to a number of reasons.

It is worth mentioning that a meeting of the International and Regional Presidents took place in June 1978 in Hanover to implement the practical consequences of the Paris decision to regionalize ICEVH efforts.

A significant role within ICEVH is played by the Resources Committee under the chairmanship of Dr. Kurt Kristensen, Denmark. The

Committee has been established in order to assist needy countries around the world in their educational programmes for the visually handicapped. Its major function consists of providing experts for conducting teacher training courses, counselling services and helping needy countries to obtain teaching aids and equipment. During my term of office, the Committee has also embarked on a new venture, i.e. seconding experts to special projects/institutions where they share their knowledge and experience with local educators. I believe that this type of support is as effective as conducting teacher training courses with participants from various projects. I am very happy to report a total number of 25 individual projects that were carried out by the Resources Committee during the first two years of the present quinquennium. The following are some examples:

**Ethiopia.** This very moment, a teacher training course is being conducted by four ICEVH experts in Addis Ababa.

**Ghana.** ICEVH secured the services of a German expert to head the teacher training centre at Akropong.

**Kenya.** In this country, ICEVH assists the government with the planning and establishment of a permanent teacher training centre, the first of such institutions in East Africa. Presently, in collaboration with Christoffel Blindenmission, a mobility course is being carried out in the capital of Nairobi, and another ICEVH expert is assisting the Egoji School for the Blind with their educational programme.

**Malawi.** From April to September, 1979, an ICEVH expert seconded by Christoffel Blindenmission, West Germany, is carrying out an evaluation of the school programme of the Lulwe Mission School for the Blind in Nsanje. She will give in-service-training to those teachers without specialization for the blind and conduct seminars for all teachers on principles and methods of teaching blind children.

**Nigeria.** A Danish ICEVH expert is to undertake an assignment in autumn 1979 at the Nakam Memorial Secondary School for the Blind in Barakin Ladi to help the school with their integrated programme.

**Sudan.** One ICEVH expert is engaged in carrying out a survey in Sudan to explore avenues of assistance to an organization of the blind.

**Hong Kong.** From 25th September to 6th November 1978, an ICEVH expert from Great Britain visited the Ebenezer School for the Blind to carry out a low vision programme. He established a record card containing the essential information required by a classroom teacher to interpret the children's visual handicap in terms of a classroom situation. He was aided by inspectors from the Hong Kong Special Education Department.

This was followed by a short workshop on education of the low vision child in **Kuala Lumpur/Malaysia.**

**India.** ICEVH donated to the Red Cross School for the Blind in Berhampur, Orissa, a Marburg Braille Duplicator to provide the blind children of Orissa with text books in the Oriya language.

**Indonesia.** Two ICEVH experts from Australia visited the Helen Keller International project which in cooperation with the Indonesian Government is training teachers for blind children, developing



procedures for making educational aids, creating a permanent mobility programme and introducing integrated education. Their particular emphasis was placed on counselling parents of pre-school blind children and on the teacher training programme for teachers for Integrated Education.

**Philippines.** The Chairman of the ICEVH Resources Committee carried out a four-week survey to explore possible areas of cooperation and assistance for the benefit of blind children. Aid measures are already under way.

**Sri Lanka.** The ICEVH President for the Far East Region undertook a two week's survey to evaluate the request from the Ministry of Education, Special Education Unit, to the ICEVH Resources Committee to establish a Braille Publishing Department. Upon his recommendation, negotiations are under way with DANIDA, the Danish Development Agency, to provide such equipment to the Ministry of Education.

In Europe, one workshop was held in **Denmark** and two in **Portugal** with the participation of advisory teachers, administrators and teachers of the visually handicapped. The themes were the measurement of visual function and the systematic training of the use of residual vision. Lecture sessions, discussions and demonstrations completed the programmes.

Another exciting ICEVH project was a sponsorship programme for needy children in developing countries through which they will be provided with an "Educational Kit for the Blind". This apparatus has been jointly developed by the Royal Commonwealth Society for the Blind, Christoffel Blindenmission and an Indian manufacturer, Voltas Ltd. It contains a standard braille writing frame, a pocket frame, an abacus, a braille ruler, two tape measures and a spurred wheel for embossing diagrams, i.e. the basic items of equipment required by a blind school student. While 8,000 of such kits have been distributed by the two aforementioned international organizations, ICEVH has launched its own appeal among schools for the blind in developed countries in order to secure more such Kits for needy children in Asia, Africa and Latin America. I am happy to report that countless blind children, educators and parents have responded to this, and up to now funds for over 1,200 Kits, each at a price of US\$20, have been collected. A Kit is available for inspection at this Conference.

Finally, I wish to mention that the official publication of ICEVH, a newsletter called "The Educator", is still being produced by the Perkins School for the Blind and made available to members of ICEVH in English, Spanish and French. "The Educator" is published twice a year, and I am extremely grateful for the very devoted services of the Editor, Mr. William T. Heisler.

ICEVH is not a one-man-show. Without the initiative and vigour of a world-wide team of people who give much of their time, energy and knowledge with the genuine desire to serve the visually handicapped, it would just be an organization that exists on paper. I am grateful to all my friends and colleagues who made ICEVH an active and serving organism.



**PROFESSIONAL SESSION 3**  
**COOPERATION IN DEVELOPMENT**

Friday morning, August 3, 1979

Chairman: Mr. Harold G. Roberts, U.S.A.

**REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON AID TO  
DEVELOPING COUNTRIES**

by Harold G. Roberts, Chairman

**Report Period: 1974-1979**

The Committee on Aid to Developing Countries is a standing committee of the World Council appointed by the Honorary Officers for a period of five years. Its primary function is to advance the general welfare of blind persons in developing countries by promoting increased bilateral and international aid.

The current membership is as follows:

Mr. Abdullah Al-Ghanim	— Saudi Arabia
Mr. Marion Golwala	— Poland
Mr. Per Hagermalm	— Sweden
Mr. Jesus Jiminez Albeniz	— Spain
Mr. André Nicolle	— France
Mr. Harold G. Roberts	— Helen Keller International
Mr. Wolfgang Stein	— Christoffel Blindenmission
Sir John Wilson, C.B.E.	— Royal Commonwealth Society for the Blind

The Committee, which has met three times during this quinquennium, is most fortunate in that Mr. Boris Zimin, President and Mr. Anders Arnör, Honorary Secretary General, have attended each meeting. The Committee will next meet in Antwerp immediately prior to the Council's General Assembly. The specific activities of the Committee include the following:

**Advocacy**

As stated earlier, the chief mission of the Committee is to advance the general welfare of blind persons in developing countries by promoting increased bilateral and international aid.

Since the members of the Committee represent advanced countries, each has played an active role in encouraging their respective nations to provide increasing assistance to meet the needs of blind persons in less

developed nations. The international representatives on the Committee have also promoted increased support from international bodies such as the United Nations and its specialized agencies, the World Bank, the European Common Market, the Organization of American States, etc.

Recently, the Committee conducted a survey to determine the amount of assistance provided to developing nations by WCWB member countries. Despite the fact that only thirteen (13) of the twenty-seven (27) countries responded to the questionnaire and some were unable to secure information about foreign assistance from all sources, it is clear that substantial progress is being made. It is estimated that the amount of annual aid is probably in the order of 20 million dollars (US) a three-fold increase in the past four-year period.

It is particularly gratifying to note that the number of member countries that are helping others in their expansion and improvement of specialized services for the blind is increasing significantly.

Copies of the full survey report are available at the WCWB Headquarters.

### **Disaster Relief**

The Honorary Officers have also assigned responsibility to the Committee on Aid for promoting assistance to countries in which natural disasters have occurred affecting blind persons and services for them. Specific requests for such assistance are directed to the Honorary Officers who, upon careful evaluation may then assign the task of securing funds to the Committee on Aid.

One such example occurred during this quinquennium in connection with the devastating earthquake in Guatemala. The Committee then undertook responsibility for promoting aid among the Council's member countries for the restoration of facilities which were either destroyed or damaged. It was most heartwarming that such aid both in cash and in kind was forthcoming in substantial amounts. In cash alone well in excess of \$100,000 (US) was contributed.

This exceptional response gives testament to the humanitarian characteristics of the international field of blindness which does in fact constitute a world family. Well-earned praise is also due to the National Committee for the Blind of Guatemala and to its president, Mrs. Elisa Molina de Stahl and her colleagues for their heroic actions in caring for the many blind persons who were injured and homeless.

The Committee has also undertaken the task of providing supplementary material for inclusion in the disaster relief manual of the United Nations Office of Disaster Relief. It contains information about the special needs of blind persons and suggested precautions that should be taken to avoid eye injuries in emergency situations.

### **UNESCO Cooperative Action Programme**

Another form of direct assistance to developing countries is expressed through its participation in UNESCO's Cooperative Action Programme. The Committee has been assigned responsibility for distributing funds made available by UNESCO from this programme. A

maximum of \$2,000 (US) for any single contribution to an agency serving blind persons has been set by the Committee. Approximately \$20,000 US has been distributed annually. Time does not permit a listing of those agencies which have benefited from this programme during this quinquennium, but every effort has been made to assure a balanced distribution geographically and to avoid duplication.

The Committee is grateful to the WCWB Secretariat for its fine assistance in administering this programme.

## **MOBILIZATION OF AID RESOURCES INCLUDING BILATERAL AND MULTILATERAL AID**

by W. Stein

Christoffel Blindenmission, Federal Republic of Germany

My subject "Mobilization of Aid Resources" is based on the fact that we are living in a world in which the goods are not equally distributed. As a consequence, part of our world's population lives in affluence, while the other part suffers from poverty. An invisible line around the globe thus separates the rich from the poor; it is this boundary that we endeavour to penetrate in order to achieve a certain balance between the two groups. Such attempt is in fact being made at various levels, with different methods and motivations. Without further examination of these so-called "Aid to Developing Countries Programmes", it seems that these actions are ruled and governed by one common denominator, i.e. on one side are those who give and on the other those who receive. Such relationship between groups imposes very unequal roles upon them, and the psychological consequences have been examined on many occasions and by various experts. They have all come to the same conclusion: The unhealthy character of this relationship is based on the fact that one group assumes a "dictating" and the other a "submissive" role. From the patronizing attitude of the giving group which determines the time, frequency, extent and nature of aid, the stigma of charity also results, and it is this very stigmatization of the relationship which does not allow a real partnership to grow between the two groups. At the end of my deliberations I shall come back to this fact.

Let us first of all examine the existing channels of International Aid Programmes. Roughly speaking, these programmes are carried out at three levels:

- (i) Government-to-Government Aid Programmes
- (ii) Organization-to-Organization Aid Programmes
- (iii) Individual-to-Individual Assistance.

I shall begin with the last group because in my opinion this is the most human, the warmest and most honest form of helping one another. Perhaps it is not always the best and most effective way, but it bears certain elements which the other two groups do not possess: It involves affection, very often love, respect for the other, and often sacrifices. I know a widow who from her small pension has financed the entire medical studies of a doctor in India, and in a recent effort of the Resources Committee of the International Council for Education of the Visually Handicapped, many individual blind children have pooled their savings in order to be able to give a Braille Educational Kit to

another needy blind child in Africa or Asia. In this context, I remember the many thousands of individual sponsorships through which on a private basis needy children and young adults are provided with education and vocational training. Very often, a most intimate relationship between sponsor and his protégé develops, from which both donor and recipient benefit through a lifelong friendship.

One of the finest examples I have seen has even very little to do with money: It is the example of a young man who spent many months with individual blind farmers in Asia, shared their frugal village life, and during his stay helped every one of them to dig a well. Between these people from different continents, race, colour, culture, language and religion, a very close affection, friendship and respect developed. Even more: the "donor" was at the same time "recipient", as he became an integral part of a people from whose traditions, customs and habits and about whose fight for survival he was able to learn. The experience broadened his own horizon, and the friendship with his far away neighbours has enriched his own life. We should encourage and further such private initiative, even though our organizational structures do not include efforts of this nature.

*Governmental Aid* plays—as many people believe—the greatest and most significant role in aid programmes. My investigations have raised doubts in such belief! Example: In 1979, a certain European country has budgetted 0.7 per cent of its annual budget for aid to developing countries. However, a closer examination reveals that 80 per cent of this amount constitutes repayable loans! What remains as a genuine donation is US \$450 million. Further investigation revealed that in the same country only nine of the largest private organizations raised US \$180 million for the same purpose, i.e. more than one third of governmental aid. Adding the funds of more than 40 other smaller organizations, and taking into consideration all channels of individual assistance, private aid equals, if not exceeds, governmental aid. I do not wish to enter into the controversy whether governmental or private development aid is more effective; however, quite a number of factors speak *for* the greater effectiveness of private aid: it is in most cases linked with the assignment of experts, it involves close partnership between donor and recipient organizations, the utilization of funds is made transparent, and frequently such aid is extended on a continued basis. In other words, I propagate and recommend aid measures of private organizations. Many representatives of such organizations are present at this conference, and I do not think that they have made fullest use of all possibilities of this type of aid, although many remarkable achievements have been made. There is a tremendous reservoir of readiness to help, resources and manpower. It will be our task to find the right ways to tap them. This brings me to the practical part of my deliberations, based on the experience of a private organization which has in the past years been able to make available constantly risking funds to developing countries. Perhaps some of the basic principles and techniques of the mobilization of aid may be of help and assistance to others.



## **Phase I Identification of Needs**

Quite frequently, this is the most difficult task, and here the overseas partner plays a vital role. Only he knows exactly what the problems and the priorities of his country are, and his proposals of how to tackle a certain problem must not be overlooked! It is not the donor organization that decides on aid programmes, but the determination and will of the overseas partner which serves as solid foundation for short or long term measures. The donor organization often has to choose between several applications for help, and identify the priorities. It must examine the possible participation of another donor group and decide on the extent and duration of its assistance. Any possible overlapping or duplication of efforts must be carefully investigated. Open and frank dialogue between partners is therefore required. Once a positive decision has been taken, loyalty and faithfulness are expected from both partners in order to secure the completion of the project. Much damage has been done by aid programmes that were started and not completed. This was often caused by the absence of a precise agreement between partners. This leads us to:

## **Phase II Communications of Partner Organizations**

The partnership should be clearly defined as to nature, extent and duration and, if possible, put down in writing. Such agreement guarantees certain rights and duties for both groups. The following clauses should be included in the agreement:

### **For the DONOR ORGANIZATION:**

- (a) To provide certain funds at certain dates.
- (b) To provide material, equipment etc. at certain dates.
- (c) To provide the services of experts for certain periods.
- (d) The right to visit the project in order to be fully informed about its progress.
- (e) The right to report on a project via mass media (press, radio, television).
- (f) The right to evaluate results for research purposes.
- (g) The right to second workers to the project for study and training purposes.

### **For the RECIPIENT ORGANIZATION:**

- (a) The commitment to develop the project in accordance with the agreement between the partners.
- (b) To make available own resources and contributions as agreed upon.
- (c) To report to the partner on a regular basis on the development of the project.
- (d) To provide the partner with audited accounts which make the utilization of funds transparent.
- (e) To determine the date of assuming total financial responsibility of the project.

### Phase III Presentation of Needs

Once an organization has decided to collect funds for needy people in another part of the world, it is well advised not to do this in an anonymous way. Slogans such as "Help the Blind" or "Give to the Poor" cannot motivate a donor. The identification of needs must precede all fund raising activities, and experience has shown that the most successful publicity is the presentation of an identified and clearly defined need. How is this done?

The presentation of needs is not only a question of clever PR techniques because there is an important moral issue at stake. It is no doubt a great art to report on poverty, suffering, and distress *without violating human dignity!* In this context, I could quote sad examples of horror pictures and shock stories revealing a complete disrespect of human dignity. Besides, such illustrations of human misery very often have the adverse effect—instead of encouraging a potential donor, they repel him! The same applies to exaggerated reports and the quotation of excessive figures.

The consideration of the following principles of fund raising activities have led—according to my experience—to the best results:

- (a) Honest and plain presentation of nature and extent of the problem, its causes and consequences.
- (b) Presentation of important details which lead to a better understanding of the problem as a whole. The simple man in the street should also be approached and his sympathy aroused.
- (c) It is useful to have this presentation endorsed by another "witness".
- (d) Presentation of the partner organization and its responsibility. The latter may best be illustrated by quoting other tasks already successfully accomplished.
- (e) Presentation of a clear plan of action. This should include the funds required and the possible involvement of experts.
- (f) The appeal should not only bear the name of an organization but also of a *person* responsible for the proper administration and utilization of funds.
- (g) The donor must be guaranteed that he will be informed about the progress of the project at regular intervals, particularly how *his* donation has contributed to the success. *This promise must be kept!*
- (h) Last not least: the receipt of every single donation, even the very smallest, must be acknowledged immediately.

Keeping these principles in mind, one is likely to find not only a donor but a friend. Through his regular donations it will be possible to secure the continued assistance of a project or to accept new commitments. In our country, there is a potential reservoir of helpful, noble and generous people, and some of them merely distrust the "channels" of aid. They have been scared off and disappointed by reports on the misuse or embezzlement of donations. It will be our task to gain and maintain their confidence. Perhaps they are more likely to trust our organizations

than the anonymous governmental aid. We must endeavour to honour their confidence.

This brings me back to my opening remarks, to the problem of the rich and the poor, the problem of giving and receiving. Nobody can tell how long the present situation in our world will last. In recent years we have observed tremendous changes in world economy, the significance of which we cannot judge today. It is quite possible that today's donors will be tomorrow's recipients, and vice versa. Many of my generation have lived to see such a phenomenon. For this reason I would like to plead for the abolishment of the present principle of "donors" and "recipients", giving and receiving, and to replace it by the belief in "sharing". It is not welfare that our world needs, but solidarity of mankind. If we do not do this out of conviction today, perhaps the circumstances will force us tomorrow. Every year presents us with more challenges and growing problems around the world. To cope with them cannot be left to the politicians. All of us who participate in this conference, all of us who carry responsibility, particularly for the handicapped, should become actively engaged in this task. It is not new techniques that we need but a new philosophy, a new belief; this belief should also determine our actions.

# COOPERATION OF THE RECIPIENT COUNTRY

by Ismaila Konate

President, Malian Association for the Welfare of the Blind

## I. Introduction

In the world of today no man can keep himself shut away and fend for himself whatever the circumstances. Interdependence is therefore the rule.

Cooperation in development with regard to the policy of emancipating the blind, comes within this field.

Thus, well provided for countries or organizations help countries less fortunate than themselves.

In order for this cooperation to be effective, certain principles, which we shall mention below, should be respected.

## II. The Philosophy of Aid

We believe that human solidarity is not an idle word. In fact, cooperation has always been the basis of human relations. All societies have taken this into account, whether or not on religious grounds and whatever the colour of their skin.

If there is ground for understanding in this disordered world, it is surely the fact that man remains of cardinal importance. All action should be directed towards preserving his dignity. Help should be given without ulterior motives and be for a specific purpose. In any case, it should never be forced on him.

## III. Conditions for Aid to be Effective

The country or the organization concerned should first of all request aid and know exactly what it is to be used for. The request should be well thought out and projects should be well coordinated. A judicious choice and a programme are therefore needed. In a word, the organization or the country should be ready to receive the aid.

### 1. *Administration*

The organization in a country soliciting aid should have its own structures and branches throughout the country. It should avoid administrative red tape, but should, however, have very close ties with the various services working for the blind. It should have a headquarters and a permanent secretariat capable of handling files, carrying out projects and giving useful information. This secretariat should naturally be organized by a competent official with unshakable faith in his task. He does not necessarily have to be a handicapped person. However, experience has shown that someone with a first-hand knowledge of the problems of the handicapped is best.

It is essential that this leader be aware of the country's problems and have connections with the public authorities.

## *2. Programme*

Programmes should form part of the development plan of the country and have the approval of the competent authorities. They should clearly define the objectives to be attained and the means of doing so.

It is wise not to be too ambitious at the start and never to go too fast. The economic and financial situation of the country should always be taken into account and the work carried out progressively.

## *3. Execution and Control*

Aid granted should always be used for the programme agreed on. In no circumstances should the money be used for other purposes. Furthermore, the execution of the work should be followed up and assessed periodically.

## *4. Continuity*

There is no point in launching a project with foreign aid unless continuity is ensured. In fact, the country's and the organization's own resources should be determined so as to carry on with the work and, if necessary, expand it.

# **III. Conclusion**

In this report we have stressed the points which are important if cooperation is to be effective. As we have said, it should be based on good organization and avoid wastage and useless action which is of no encouragement to those who wish to help.

In this context a satisfactory result can be achieved both for the donor and the recipient.



# THE BLIND IN DISASTER SITUATIONS (Earthquake in Guatemala—1976)

by Elisa Molina de Stahl, Guatemala

## 1. General Background

For the purpose of this presentation, I think that it is essential to offer a historical summary of the structure of our organization: The National Committee for the Blind.

The National Committee for the Blind was founded in 1946 in Guatemala, Central America.

This Committee renders assistance without receiving any state subsidy or contribution. The support of the organization stems from the income originated by a lottery and from private donations. Such funds are not sufficient to cover the budget owing to the high standards of its service, their vast social projection and the continuous need for expansion.

The highest authority relies on a Board of Directors, whose members serve *ad honorem*. The planning, coordination, and evaluation of the programmes are carried out by a multiprofessional team, presided by the Executive Director, who supervises all activities.

## 2. Objectives

2.1 Prevention of Blindness, treatment of eye diseases and sight conservation programmes.

Education, rehabilitation and geriabilitation of the blind and visually handicapped.

Training of specialized personnel and promotion of eye health in all strata of the population.

In order to reach these objectives, the Committee is divided in two branches:

Administrative and  
Technical

The second includes:

2.1.1 Medical Division:

- (a) Prevention of Blindness
- (b) Treatment of eye diseases
- (c) Sight Conservation
- (d) Postgraduate Course in Ophthalmology
- (e) Training courses for members of the medical and paramedical personnel.

These activities are carried out in hospitals and clinics, in urban and rural areas.

### 2.1.2 Educational Division:

- (a) Early stimulation programmes for blind and visually handicapped children
- (b) Early stimulation programmes for deaf and aphasic children
- (c) Pre-grammar and grammar school educational programmes for blind and visually handicapped children
- (d) Pre-grammar and grammar school educational programmes for deaf and aphasic children
- (e) Educational programmes for blind children with additional problems
- (f) Industrial educational programmes for blind youngsters of normal and moderate intelligence.

These programmes are developed in co-educational and residential schools.

- (g) Integration programmes for blind children in public schools.

### 2.1.3 Division of Vocational Rehabilitation and Geriabilitation:

- (a) Vocational Rehabilitation programmes for blind adults of urban areas
- (b) Agricultural Vocational Training Center for rural adult blind
- (c) Placement services for urban and rural blind
- (d) Sheltered workshops
- (e) Geriatric rehabilitation programmes for aged blind
- (f) Subsidies for aged blind, with multiple deficiencies.

## 3. The 1976 Catastrophe

At dawn, on February 4, 1976, Guatemala was shaken by a violent earthquake which affected 75 per cent of the country, paralyzing all its vital services. However, the majority of the Committee's personnel promptly reported to lend their services that same day.

It would be well to emphasize that during those difficult moments, almost everyone was present: members of the Board, executives, technicians and service personnel. Nobody stayed behind the lines at this very crucial time, in which a great spirit of cooperation, solidarity and responsibility prevailed on the part of the personnel, who love, understand, and have taken the work of the Institution unto themselves.

### 3.1 Medical Assistance during the disaster:

Besides helping at their own work centers, the teaching staff gave voluntary services in the Agency's main hospital which, in spite of being seriously damaged, became an assistance center, not only for eye and ear diseases, but for all types of traumas.

The clinics in the interior of the country which were destroyed were replaced by emergency camps in canvas wall tents serving as clinics where ordinary and extraordinary work was continued according to the needs of the moment, thus serving a double

purpose: first, the objectives previously established for the prevention of blindness and second, care was provided for people who needed these services at the time of the emergency.

When the clearing and reconstruction stage came, the Committee planned an informative campaign on prevention using all communications media (billboards, posters, radio, TV, etc.), both in Spanish as in the regional dialects derived from the Mayan language.

Furthermore, as the earthquake coincided with the year dedicated by WHO for the Prevention of Blindness, in spite of the circumstances, great priority was given to all preventive aspects of eye hygiene, and those who were at risk were given protective eyeglasses as well as the necessary assistance and treatment. The participation of the Committee's officials at the head of this movement reached places which were almost inaccessible, and became an example that spread and enabled the fulfilment of WHO's basic principles and the Committee's objectives.

### 3.2 Educational and Rehabilitation Services during the disaster:

In temporary camps installed in the gardens and patios of our Schools and Rehabilitation Centers, students who were left homeless and who were subject to great dangers and severe want in their homes were given care. This group of the population, counting students and adults, was very high.

### 3.3 Social Impact:

The first step was to establish an estimate of the number of people injured, as well as of the damages sustained at the Agency's centers.

An individual survey was then carried out with regard to the number of deceased, vanished, injured and wounded among the blind and their relatives. An analysis was also made in each case with regard to those who were left completely homeless or with partially destroyed dwellings.

Based on this study, we were able to establish the following: that from the total blind and visually handicapped population of the country, 0.41 per cent died or disappeared; 28 per cent were injured or had minor wounds; 66 per cent were left homeless; 23 per cent were left with partially destroyed dwellings; 48 per cent were placed in emergency camps; and 41 per cent received tents to install in their own premises.

This population, in its entirety, was furnished with drinking water, food, clothing, medical services, medicines, and psychological services.

In cooperation with State and municipal services, assistance was given for removing dwellings which were in danger of falling down. The total of these dwellings accounted for 64 per cent of those partially destroyed.

Construction materials were given to 41 per cent of this population, as well as technical assistance for construction. Housing

applications were presented to the National Housing Bank (BANVI) on behalf of 48 per cent of this group. These houses were obtained in a relatively short time.

The Savings and Loans Credit Union "CIEGOS UNIDOS" granted loans at 1.6 per cent and up to a maximum amount of Q.5,000.00 for each blind person affected by the earthquake. These were reconstruction loans and were made possible by a loan received from FENACOAC (The National Federation of Cooperatives for Loans and Savings).

Financial aid in a lump sum was given to the families of the blind who died during the catastrophe.

All the people sponsored under this plan were given guidance and supervision with regard to health aspects due to the emergency situation.

### 3.4 Behaviour of the Blind at the time of the Earthquake:

From any point of view, the blind or visually handicapped are no different than the sighted, except for their limitation of vision. Therefore they act and function just as the rest of the population and insofar as their behaviour in practical life. A blind person's reactions in such a situation are as varied as that of the rest of the people.

Through the process of special education and rehabilitation, the blind learn to use the rest of their senses, which allows them to function by making use of the rest of their sensorial potential.

#### 3.4.1 Description of the phenomenon as lived by the blind:

Both the blind and the sighted listened to a noise similar to the breaking of waves or a rumble, and as this noise got closer, the seismic tremors started to be felt with more intensity each time. The intensity of the earthquake caused the automatic shut-off of electricity, which left the sighted without the use of artificial light. But the blind are trained to move around in the dark with perfect orientation and a clear knowledge of those places which might pose physical danger to them or their families. Although many objects (leads) moved from their regular places, the blind, with the aid of points of reference, had a greater advantage than the sighted. There were numberless cases in which the blind guided their seeing relatives until they reached a safe place.

The entire population, without distinction between the blind and the sighted, the rich or the poor, did not escape the anxiety, confusion and panic caused by this situation of strong emotional stress. It was really very difficult for the blind and the visually handicapped to walk through streets full of debris and danger. No reactions of gross psychopathology were observed among the blind who were hospitalized, but they did show great concern in knowing the fate of their relatives.

### 3.5 International Aid:

Because of the usual efficiency and organizational capacity of the World Council and its specific Commission on Aid to Developing Countries, the National Committee for the Blind received timely aid and moral support. The World Council first served in the capacity of world promoter and, after its benevolent achievements, as a catalyzing entity. All donations were used according to the needs and problems to be solved. Furthermore, they constituted a morale raising factor which touched our feelings and generated new energy to continue our endeavour with the same faith, the same devotion and the same zeal.

We can now repeat as in the past: Gracias!, many gracias, infinite gracias to all of you who, living far from us geographically, showed that in our world another's pain moves us to universal cooperation. You came, promptly and overflowing with fraternal kindness, to help mitigate the tragedies engendered by the cataclysm of February 4, 1976 that affected, in every way, three-quarters of our country so full of ideals, dreams, fulfilment. Again and again, Gracias. The cooperation of all—of your own people and of you who were then strangers and now are brothers and sisters—permitted the *Comite Nacional Pro Ciegos y Sordomudos* to continue lending its services without interruption, even when its only roof was the beautiful Guatemalan sky, its only walls the Guatemalan mountains, looming majestically far away in our horizon.



## PROFESSIONAL SESSION 4

### COOPERATION IN IDENTIFYING PRIORITIES IN NATIONAL PLANNING AND IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF PROFESSIONAL PERSONNEL

Friday afternoon, August 3, 1979

Chairman: Mr. Svend Jensen, Denmark

### REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

by Svend Jensen, Chairman

#### Background

The World Council for the Welfare of the Blind has, through its Standing Committees, tried to promote the development of some specific fields, such as education, rehabilitation and employment of the blind, etc.

Gradually as conditions have changed towards a more complicated social structure in the developed as well as in the developing countries, the need has arisen to map out and to influence the basic conditions of the daily life of the citizens.

Upon examination of the discussions of precedent general assemblies, it appears that a connection between the various fields of activities stands out more and more clearly, just as it appears that these depend to a great extent on the organization, planning and resources of society.

These considerations are clearly reflected in the resolutions adopted at the General Assembly in São Paulo, Brazil, 1974. It was after this General Assembly that the present Committee was set up. Mr. Ross C. Purse of Canada was nominated chairman with the following members:

Mr. Ismaila Konate, Mali  
Miss Winnie Ng, Malaysia  
Mr. Dobrosław Spychalski, Poland  
Mr. Svend Jensen, Denmark  
Mr. E. W. Christiansen, New Zealand  
Mr. Boris V. Zimin, USSR, *ex officio*.

It was further intended to appoint a representative from the United Kingdom and one from the United States of America.

Owing to an overwhelming national workload, Mr. Ross C. Purse informed the Executive Committee of the World Council that he was no longer able to chair the Committee. At the Executive meeting in

Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, in 1977, the Committee accepted the resignation of Mr. Purse and nominated Svend Jensen, Denmark in his stead.

To establish the basis for continued activity of the Committee, the Chairman was invited to a discussion with the Honorary Officers of the World Council in Paris in August 1977.

The Honorary Officers approved the Chairman's suggestion that the Committee should add representatives from regions not so far represented. The Committee is now composed as follows:

Mr. Ismaila Konate, Mali  
Miss Winnie Ng, Malaysia  
Mr. Ross C. Purse, Canada  
Dr. A. L. de Silva, United Kingdom  
Mr. Dobrosław Szychalski, Poland  
Mr. Francisco Vasquez-Gorrio, Peru  
Mrs. Ferzana Kazarani, Bahrein  
Mr. Boris V. Zimin, USSR.

The Committee was given the following fields of interest on which to base its work:

1. Attitudes towards blindness as a handicap
2. The care of the blind child and parent guidance
3. Institutions (residential homes) and homes for the aged
4. The care of the multi-handicapped (excluding the deaf-blind)
5. Social legislation
6. Social insurance
7. Recreation and leisure activities (excluding sports, for which a special Standing Committee has been set up)
8. Price reductions and increased services for journeys by plane, train, etc.

It is clearly emphasized that the work of the Committee should not interfere with the fields of interest of other existing committees, but should deal only with purely basic subjects in fields where specialized organs are already working.

At first sight, the subjects may seem to be very unambiguous, but on reflection, it appears that first and foremost it is necessary for the Committee to try to map out the conception of the subjects, since the Committee's geographic field of activity is global and therefore covers the most varied communities, structures, political systems, cultural backgrounds and economic capacities. The Committee therefore sent a circular letter to all its members asking for the local definition of the term "social development". Further, we asked for the three principal objectives of the member organization and finally the three practical tasks considered to be the most important.

However, as the European Regional Committee is working on the presentation of basic social demands in the European countries, it was decided, as far as Europe was concerned, to await the results of this work in order to have a joint European summing up of the problems. This took place at the General Assembly of the European Regional Committee in Prague in November 1978 where a resolution on the social rights of the blind was adopted.

As a basis for its future work, the Committee now has the above-mentioned resolution and the replies to the circular letter from ten countries outside Europe. The United Nations Declaration of December 9, 1975 on the Rights of Disabled Persons will naturally also be included in future initiatives as a valuable working basis.

At first sight the term "social development" may seem to be very straightforward and simple, but on reflection it is not as simple as it appears.

The term can be divided up into an interpretation of the word "social" and the word "development".

The word "social" is often connected with economy because the expression "social politics" traditionally covers social measures aimed at creating welfare systems of various kinds for the individual citizen. Such systems will often take the form of economic support or practical assistance to persons who, for a short or long period, are in an unusual situation. The definition of the word "social" can, however, also mean forming part of the community and working for the common good. Using this definition of the word, it will, for the blind be a question of aiming at equality and integration in what we call the normal community.

The term "development" is also very often connected with economy, owing to the fact that development is mentioned, for instance, in relation to the degree of industrialization and much of the aid granted by the rich countries to the poor ones is aimed at increasing the economic development of the country in question.

Development can also be something purely humanitarian, i.e. aiming at improving the quality of life.

There are other possible interpretations of the term "social development" but merely by taking into account those mentioned above leads us to ask whether, in our member organizations, there exists an unambiguous attitude towards the term.

From the few replies received from the member organizations, it can be noted that the interpretation of the term "social development" does not deviate much from one place to another. In general, social development is considered to be a striving towards a community with greater equality, with a positive attitude of acceptance towards all groups of minorities; a community which does not isolate special groups but, on the contrary, tries to build up an all embracing whole.

It is obvious that the premises on which this viewpoint is based are different because conditions are different from one region to another throughout the world. But it can also be noted that there seems to be a uniform viewpoint of the objectives, whereas there are different viewpoints about the means of attaining them. Also the interpretation of the objective differs, a difference originating first and foremost from the ethical and cultural backgrounds of the respective countries.

## **Objectives**

All our member organizations have a number of fundamental objectives, most of which are laid down in the Statutes. Generally, such objectives have an idealistic interpretation owing to the fact that

they serve as a guiding star for the daily work. The Committee has asked which three sections of the objectives our members consider to be the most important and the three subjects which are chiefly stated are education, training and employment.

### **Practical work**

We are, of course, aware that in the daily work the ideals and the principles are not constantly dealt with but that the total and final aim of the organizations is the realization of the objectives. The day's work has, however, its demands on the solving of many different problems and we have therefore also asked the member organizations to inform us which three activities they consider the most important at the moment and again we have received the replies *education, training and employment*.

### **Conclusion**

To evaluate the information mentioned above, we must establish that on a global level the aims of the organizations are rather narrow at the present time. Education, training and employment are fields of activity aiming at certain groups of the blind, i.e. children, young people and adults—that is, adults in good physical shape apart from being blind, and not too old. The problems of these groups are naturally very important, but the groups outside these fields of activities are probably much larger.

In the industrialized countries, public efforts for the blind over some two hundred years have developed. In the beginning, work for the blind took place in communities with limited resources and the few resources available had therefore to be used in a concentrated effort based upon an estimate of the effectiveness of the utilization of the resources. The result was the establishment of special institutions for the blind. The development took place so fast that over a period of less than fifty years a wide-ranging net of special institutions was established in the entire industrialized part of the world. The development offered new possibilities for education, training and employment of the blind and, from this point of view, the development must be said to be positive. But the price to be paid for this positive development was that the blind became isolated from the normal community, which resulted in problems when the blind person regained the normal community. Next, "integration" became the big slogan and it resulted in a reduction of established special institutions with the intention of avoiding segregation as far as possible.

Exchange of experiences is part of the work of WCWB, so that mistakes made in one part of the world will not be made in others. Therefore, the idea which immediately comes to mind is that the industrialized countries should recommend non-industrialized countries to avoid the development described here and establish integrated systems from the beginning.

We must, however, realize that the problem is not so simple. Firstly, in many non-industrialized countries resources and manpower are



scarce and this must necessarily lead to a concentration of resources. Secondly, an integrated system implies that, on the whole, there is something to integrate into and this is not the case everywhere in the world, because in some of the countries there are no education, training and employment possibilities for the entire population.

We must therefore realize that some of the non-industrialized countries will not be able to do without a system of special institutions.

These countries must benefit from the experience of the industrialized countries and plan the institutions accordingly. Therefore it must be seen to that these special institutions do not become enclaves in the community but show an active and extrovert attitude, ensuring that clients do not become alienated from the demands of a normal life, just as the normal population must be given the necessary knowledge and information of the activities of the special institutions so that the minorities when they have finished their education and return to their communities will not be met with the wrong attitudes.

The consequences of a special institution system, owing to lack of resources will, of course, be that offers will be limited to a small group of blind people. This involves the risk of creating an elite and it is therefore of vital importance that in the future activities of all special institutions the demands of less fortunate fellow countrymen are taken into account. It must be realized that future organizing policy will, in all essentials, be based on the few blind people who have received relevant education and training. Therefore, if the future aim of the organizations is to be to the benefit of all the blind, measures have to be taken so that the well educated elite are not brought up only to take care of their own limited fields of interest.

### **Future Activities of the Committee**

When the Committee was set up, certain tasks within the social field were enumerated and the hope was expressed that the Committee would set up sub-committees to take care of tasks within each special field.

A division of the work of the Committee into sub-specialities cannot, however, be considered appropriate. Special committees are desirable to take care of special objectives in fields where basic starting points are available and where the building up of service functions is therefore possible. If this is not the case, it is impossible not to take into account the connection there is in the whole spectrum of tasks. It is, for instance, not possible to deal with problems such as social security, education and employment of the blind without at the same time taking into consideration the general attitude of the community to the blind.

It must be realized that the conditions or the basis for the work of the Committee differ according to the region in which the work has to be done.

It therefore seems to be more reasonable to build up the rules of the work of the Committee based on the regional division of the World Council for the Welfare of the Blind. The European Regional Committee has just decided to set up a standing committee to deal with



social matters and it would be a good idea to recommend all Regional Committees to follow this example. If this suggestion can be carried through, the Standing Committee on Social Development of the WCWB ought to consist of representatives appointed among the members of these regional social committees. With such a structure, it will be possible to do work which is essential in every region and it will also be possible to coordinate the efforts and carry through principal discussions to the benefit of a development aiming at the objectives we have in common—the objectives of equality and an active interest in what is going on in the community.

By way of illustration of the work of such a regional committee, we quote below the beginning of a resolution on the social rights of the blind, approved by the General Assembly of the European Regional Committee in Prague:

“Every individual is entitled to free development of his own positive capacities and full realization of his personality in the physical, mental, and moral spheres. This fundamental right also applies without limitation to blind people. It puts them into the position to fulfil their duties towards society in the same way as all other citizens. Society has the duty to provide all necessary conditions so that the blind person can enjoy the same rights as all other citizens. This concept is based, generally, on the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights and more particularly on the “Declaration on the Rights of Disabled Persons” which was adopted by the UN General Assembly on December 9, 1975.

“A Resolution on the Social Rights of the Blind is necessary in addition, because blindness is a particularly severe handicap which can endanger the very existence of the individual and, therefore, calls for special measures to ensure equal opportunity. It is essential that a system of social services be set up by every national government and society which guarantees that all blind citizens can live in security, freedom and dignity. Although blindness can never be offset by legal and social action, the functional obstruction which results from this handicap can be relieved to some extent by social rights and measures.”

It will be an obvious task for a new committee on social development to carry through a debate on a global level, for instance, using as a basis the European presentation in order to provide a worldwide declaration on the social rights of the blind.

The Honorary Officers of the WCWB made it possible for the Committee to be represented at the “Rehabilitation International” Conference on Legislation Concerning the Disabled, held in Manila in January 1978. The participation in this congress had two purposes. Firstly, to demonstrate our desire to cooperate with other invalid groups, secondly, to register the development and initiatives, if any. It should be noted that “Rehabilitation International” is an organization chiefly concerned with the interests of the physically handicapped group and our problems were only dealt with in the congress to a minor degree. The Committee is of the opinion that this clearly indicates that the World Council for the Welfare of the Blind has been able to place itself as the central world organization within our special field.

We must, however, emphasize that this, shall we call it, division of the work, clearly shows the need for cooperation. Rehabilitation International adopted a number of resolutions, one of which is mentioned below:

“The Congress recommends that national and international advisory groups are established which can assist political organs in working out legislation in the social field. It is also recommended that such advisory organs should consist of public representatives as well as representatives from institutions and organizations for and of the disabled. Such a development may evoke a response in several places of the world because there is an increasing tendency towards general solutions of the problems of the handicapped. Such a development also falls in line with the desire to increase integration of the handicapped in the normal community. The development must not proceed in such a way so that general solutions are established, without attention being paid to the very special needs of each category of handicapped. Our member organizations must therefore carefully watch whether such advisory organizations are set up and, in the affirmative, ensure that they can exercise their influence therein.

As outlined above, the Committee has tried to get a general idea of its field of activities. Investigations have shown that it is very difficult to obtain working material in some of our fields of interest. It is therefore of the greatest importance that ILO has started collecting material on social legislation concerning the blind. This material will be a valuable tool for the future work of the Committee on Social Development.

## PLANNING IN EASTERN EUROPEAN COUNTRIES

by Yanaky Gradev

President, Union of the Blind in Bulgaria

Planning in the countries of Eastern Europe, whose official state policy is the socialist way of development, represents a fundamental part of the system of state government. These countries are: the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR), the Socialist Republic of Rumania, the People's Republic of Bulgaria, the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, the People's Republic of Albania, the People's Republic of Hungary, the People's Republic of Poland, the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic and the German Democratic Republic. Common characteristics of the social systems of these countries are the political influence of the workers and the predominantly public ownership of the means of production. This is the premise for total central planning and control of economic and social development in socialist society.

The very essence of socialist planning is the conscious determination and maintenance of the necessary proportions in the development of the economy and society as a whole. Its main objectives are concern for mankind, meeting the ever-growing material and moral needs of the people, and development of every aspect of the personality. Planning does not mean keeping proportionality in general. Its aim is to develop socialist relations in accordance with the objective economic laws and utilize the advantages of public ownership to the good of all members of society. In this connection, the scientific level of planning is constantly increasing. Scientific planning is linked to the use of all available information and modern technology in order to process data in the shortest time possible.

In practice planning is carried out in strictly consistent stages. At each stage, the basic planning documents are worked out. Some of these documents concern different types of plans, e.g. long-term plans, five-year plans and current plans. Others cover the developments preceding the working out of plans, the pre-planning developments. They serve as a means of scientific planning and also as a means to its improvement.

On the national level, economic and social planning is carried out in the context of the national economic plan. It comprises indices of production forces, development in general and in various branches, the growth of the total national product and national income. The social side of planning covers both the processes of production spheres and non-production spheres, e.g. health, education, science, culture, living standards. The indices of the national economic plan (recently called "a plan for social and economic development") reveal the interests of

the different social groups, and the interests of the working class in particular.

Central definition of the main planning objectives is combined with the wide powers and rights of the local government bodies and economic units, as well as those of the working groups, in choosing the ways and means of effectively attaining these objectives; in the search for resources for implementing the plans, in the rational use of materials and working resources.

Care for mankind is the basic concern of the communist parties and workers' parties in the socialist countries of Eastern Europe. They form their policies wholly on that ground. "All in favour of man and for the welfare of man!" is the leading slogan for social reconstruction and organization.

The main interests of the visually handicapped in the socialist countries of Eastern Europe are revealed in the state policies of these countries and are accomplished by planning on national level. This covers care for pre-school blind children, education of the visually impaired, prevention of blindness, medical treatment, social security, etc.

Primary education (eight classes) in these countries is free and compulsory. Usually it is carried out in specialized residential state schools. Many of the specialized schools have classes for pre-school children, too. There is a tendency to continue education in secondary schools. In the Soviet Union, secondary school education is compulsory. The number of blind university students is constantly growing.

Health control is a very essential part of state policy. Medical care is free and accessible to all. There is a wide choice of establishments for treatment and prophylaxy at different levels, with ophthalmological departments. Periodical clinical examination and treatment of patients with eye diseases is practised, as is prophylaxy which leads to a decrease in the percentage of blindness.

The visually handicapped in the European socialist countries have good disablement remuneration and retirement pensions, guaranteed by the law. Some of the countries have introduced social pensions for the blind who are not entitled to another type of pension, while in other countries such blind people receive social aids. In all countries the visually impaired population is privileged in relation to state taxes. They do not pay many of the state taxes and are entitled to free transportation in their place of residence. They pay only part, and sometimes nothing, of the prices of tickets for state transport.

Social integration of the members of society is an important part of state policy in Eastern European countries, and that implies providing favourable conditions for social integration of the visually handicapped, as well. Depending on the specific conditions and circumstances of each country, there are different ways of solving the problems of blind people. It is very important, however, that in some countries the problem of employment has already been solved and that in others it is on the way to a complete solution for all visually impaired people who can and want to work. As a rule, visually impaired workers have a shorter working day and longer paid annual leave.



The organizations of the blind in the socialist countries are actively engaged in the formulation and implementation of state policy related to care for the visually handicapped. They work in cooperation with state and public institutions, which are concerned with blindness. By organizing their specific work for the welfare of the blind, the organizations of the blind contribute to increasing and improving the efforts of society to improving their lives. The activities of the organizations of the blind can be described as follows:

- organizational work
- basic rehabilitation of the newly blind
- work with the parents of blind children
- supply of technical aids and instruction on how to use them
- providing braille literature and talking books
- organizing work for the visually handicapped
- developing sports and physical culture
- organizing cultural life
- financial support and other services.

As an illustration attention is drawn to the specific functions and planning procedures of the Union of the Blind in Bulgaria. In 1976, at the 11th Congress of the Bulgarian Communist Party, the role of social organizations in Bulgaria was defined as follows: "In the stage of building up developed socialist society, the role and importance of social organizations constantly increases, due to their social and political character, which is an objective necessity and a main direction of the development of socialist democracy." The Congress suggested "more actively to encourage the social organizations and movements to take over state functions in order to link their activity more closely to the specific interests of the different classes and strata of population, and to improve the whole political organization of our society."

The Union of the Blind in Bulgaria is a welfare organization of the blind and visually impaired persons with less than 0.08 per cent of visual acuity. It has about 7,500 members. Its work is recognized and supported, therefore the Government allots to it the responsibility for significant state projects, e.g. organization and management of the sheltered industrial enterprises employing hundreds of visually impaired people. Also special Government texts state that a number of certain products shall be produced only by the enterprises of the Union. These enterprises produce oil and air filters for all kinds of internal combustion engines, control panels for lifting machines, software and electrical materials, bottle caps, plastics, etc., representing over 58 million dollars per year. The greater part of production is carried out in cooperation with state industrial enterprises.

A scientific construction centre of the Union works on the problems of scientific organization of labour and production in the system of the Union following the specific requirements of blind employment. It is responsible for the construction and development of technical aids to ease the work and life of visually impaired people.

Many visually handicapped individuals who do not continue their studies prefer to work in the sheltered industrial enterprises of the



Union, because the conditions there are most favourable: there is modern production with adequate organization of labour and adapted technology; a 35-hour working week of 5 working days; cheap and tasty food at the canteens of each enterprise; and many other facilities and services for the workers.

In the system of the Union about 2,500 visually handicapped individuals are employed; 2,400 of them work in the industrial enterprises. About 350 visually impaired persons do intellectual work, are physiotherapists, etc. Our opinion is that the problem of employing the visually handicapped who can and want to work is already solved, because the total number of visually handicapped below 50 years of age does not exceed 3,000.

The profits of the economic activity are used to finance development of the industrial enterprises and the whole activity of the Union. Disposing of its own means, the Union is able to organize a large-scale programme of production, social and cultural developments. It builds production premises, hostels (715 beds), blocks of flats (for 312 families), kindergartens, shops, clubs and big cultural homes with performance halls, libraries, gymnasia, etc. In this way the Union of the Blind in Bulgaria makes its contribution to the total construction of the country and meets the living needs of its members. The enterprises provide free transportation of the workers from their homes to the enterprise and back.

The Union disposes of four holiday houses, which accommodate about 4,000 union members and their families for holidays each year. About 700–800 union members are accommodated in sanatoria annually.

The Union has a centre for basic rehabilitation of the newly blind. The training course lasts 5 months and is free of charge.

Much attention is paid to meeting the cultural needs of visually handicapped people. There are cultural and educational centres which organize various courses, lectures and other activities. Artistic activity is very popular among the visually handicapped. There are folklore groups, orchestras, dancing groups, choirs, theatrical troupes, etc., all composed of amateurs. The Union has a choir of 60 professional singers.

There is a braille printing house, which issues five braille magazines, publishes all material used in the schools for visually impaired children and other basic books in braille.

The talking book service of the Union provides all kinds of literature on tape and cassette. There are libraries all over the country supplying visually handicapped people with braille books and talking books. In places where there are no libraries, the mail service is used. The total braille stock of the Union is over 10,000 units with 1,200 titles. The talking book stock is about 2,800 titles. The annual output of the talking book studio is about 200 books and two magazines.

The Union of the Blind in Bulgaria has organized the supply of tape recorders, cassette-players, braille typewriters and other technical aids at half price. It provides financial help to some of its members, when in need; organizes and supports holidays for visually impaired children; employs sighted help for blind intellectuals.

The whole activity of the Union of the Blind in Bulgaria is subject to planning. The basic planning document is the five-year plan, which is approved by the General Assembly of the Union. It is divided into annual plans revealing the social and economic development of the Union, as well as its main objectives. There are separate annual programmes for technical development, sport activity, international contacts, etc.

The preparation of these documents takes several months, during which period there are investigations, analyses and meetings at the primary organizations and enterprises. In the process of working out the plans, both working people and planning authorities are consulted, and cooperating industrial enterprises and trade organizations are contacted. This coordinating work aims at guaranteeing real planning, scientifically based and related to the resources needed. The annual plans are approved by the General Assembly of the Central Council of the Union. The Board of the Union takes the responsibility of controlling periodically the implementation of the plans.

Similar planning practice is followed in the other organizations of the blind in Eastern Europe. The experience of our organizations leads us to make the following recommendations to all organizations of the blind and for the blind—

*Recognizing* that planning is a basic method of management, the social organizations of and for the blind should act to convince their governments to include the problems of the blind in the national development programmes for their complete solution; and should organize planning of their specific activity on a scientific basis.

## PLANNING WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF DEVELOPMENT

by Miss J. S. Attah

Director of Higher Education in Nigeria

During the pre-independent era in Nigeria, the voluntary agencies were solely responsible for the education of the young handicapped children. The earliest attempt at providing meaningful education for the group of children dates back to 1948 when some voluntary, charitable and philanthropic organizations established a few centres, notably for the blind and deaf. Later on, homes for the severely physically handicapped or the mentally retarded children were established so as to provide home and care for the children. At this time, Government was only marginally involved in the education of the handicapped children being mainly confined to providing occasional grants-in-aid to the voluntary organization.

2. With the constitutional developments of the 1950s, education received greater governmental attention and Special Education was not left out. At the regional and local levels, in particular, governmental agencies (Education, Health and Social Welfare) gradually became more involved in the education of the handicapped—more funds were disbursed for that purpose and the supervision of the institutions for the handicapped was regularized. In the 1960s, the National Advisory Council for the Blind actively promoted the education and welfare of the visually handicapped children and adults. Through the Council's advice, a number of vocational and farm centres were set up throughout the Federation for the sole purpose of rehabilitating the visually handicapped.

3. However, purposeful planning for the education of the handicapped by the Federal and the State governments started with the Second National Development Plan 1970–74. During this period, the government was determined to equalize educational opportunities for Nigerian children. In addition to designing programmes to train and rehabilitate the handicapped, the Federal Government planned to build four national rehabilitation and training centres fully equipped with facilities to train beggars and destitutes to become useful citizens. Two mobile eye clinics were to be acquired to provide preventive measures aimed at reducing the incidence of blindness in the country. And, to serve about 500 visually handicapped children attending primary, secondary and teacher training institutions in the country, the Federal Government approved the establishment of a Braille press.

4. In 1973, a separate unit was set up within the Teacher Training Section of the Federal Ministry of Education mainly to coordinate the various activities and programmes of the institutions that are set up to

cater for the handicapped. This was a major development. From that time onwards, the planning for the education of the handicapped and the monitoring of the activities of the several institutions in the field became greatly improved. In 1974, for instance, there were twenty institutions in the country for the visually, auditory and physically handicapped, excluding, of course, the "Open Education Scheme" operated by the Local Education Authorities in the former Northern Region of Nigeria. By 1977, there were thirty institutions located in twelve of the nineteen States of the Federation enrolling a total of 2,307 children at the primary school level. These institutions were made up of eight for the blind enrolling 359; nine for the deaf enrolling 849 and 13 for the physically handicapped enrolling 1,099. To ensure that these institutions were properly run and maintained, the Federal Government between 1973 and 1975, gave a total sum of N500,000 to rehabilitate the buildings of, and to purchase much needed equipment for the special schools and the "Open Education Scheme". The money was disbursed through the State Governments, thus keeping the State Governments actively involved in the education of the handicapped.

5. In the Second National Development Plan, the government indicated its intention to set up a Committee to examine the entire area of Special Education. The Committee submitted its report in 1975 and the report revealed that the major difficulty was the lack of expertise on the part of educationists who are involved in initiating policies in the area of Special Education. It was therefore suggested that the Special Education Unit in the Federal Ministry of Education should issue guide lines to assist the States in setting up their units and pay advisory visits frequently when such units were being set up. States were to be encouraged in training their headquarters staff in the areas of visual, auditory and physically handicapped, so that these staff could in turn plan and supervise institutions for the handicapped. To assist the State Governments in training their personnel, the Federal Government, in Fiscal years 1975-76 and 1976-77, awarded a number of scholarships. In 1976-77 alone, under the Federal Special Education Scheme, a total of 73 teachers from the 19 states of the Federation were sponsored by the Federal Government to study in Special Education institutions in the United Kingdom, USA and Ghana. In addition, the Cambridge Institute of Education, under a special arrangement has mounted a special one-year course for special Education practitioners from some of the States of the former Northern Region.

6. Another problem highlighted upon in the Survey Report was the lack of teachers in the various areas of Special Education. The Report showed that roughly 90 per cent of teachers and assistants in special schools had no formal training for jobs that they were doing and that what they had so far achieved was due to sheer dedication. This challenge was faced squarely when preparing the third National Development Plan. Under the Plan, the Federal Ministry of Education commissioned a number of studies which culminated in the establishment of the Federal Advanced Teachers' College, Ibadan in 1977. The College was established specifically to provide the much needed special



teachers for the first two levels of education. In addition, funds were made available to the University of Ibadan to establish a degree course and to resuscitate its certificate course in Special Education. The shorter course was established for primary school teachers with considerable experience. At present, the University of Jos also has a certificate course in Special Education and it has plans to establish a degree programme.

### **Planning for Special Education: Special School Versus Integrated System**

7. In planning for Special Education, two basic approaches are frequently mentioned; that is the provision of Special Schools or the integration of Special Education programmes into the normal school system. The merits and demerits of both approaches had been sufficiently documented and it is not my intention in this paper to go into the details of the debates. Suffice it to say that Nigeria accepts the principle of integrating the education of the visually, auditory and handicapped children into the country's educational system as early as possible but it must be recognized that it is impossible at this time to implement such a policy in its totality, especially at the primary level, mainly because of lack of staff and equipment. For the meantime, while efforts will continue at integration, it is believed that it will be more expedient to have boarding or day special schools for the three major categories of handicapped children, so as to make the maximum use of available trained teachers and resources at the primary level. However, as soon as teachers are available in sufficient numbers, the integrated system, first through units, to be followed by full integration will be adopted, where feasible. The "open education scheme" through which itinerant teachers visit integrated schools for visually handicapped children offering expert help and advice will be fully used to advantage at that time. At the post-primary level, visually, auditory and physically handicapped children are being successfully integrated into secondary schools, trade centres, technical colleges, teacher training colleges and universities where they compete successfully with other children. At this level of education, it is our experience, however, that on the whole the visually handicapped children do better than children with other disabilities. The number of handicapped students integrated into post-primary institutions all over the country was recently put at 15,622. The figures range from 2 to 21 in some states and 847 to 13,599 in states which have established Special Education programmes at the primary level.

8. In planning for the Universal Primary Education Scheme, it was accepted that the handicapped children have as much right to education as others. The State Governments were then called upon to ascertain the number of handicapped children who should be catered for under the scheme. This was by no means an easy task since many parents were reluctant to produce their children because of local taboos and superstitions. Yet, the importance of obtaining accurate and reliable statistics



cannot be over emphasized. Despite the difficulty, state officials succeeded in obtaining some date with which initial planning for special Education was made.

## 9. Other Types of Special Schools in Existence

- (a) *Leprosarium Schools*: These schools currently exist in only three states of the Federation. The schools provide education for children who are undergoing treatment at Leprosy centres so that when the children are eventually discharged, they can fit into the ordinary schools with their age groups. Because of this important responsibility, more of these schools are needed especially in those states which have none at the present time.
- (b) *The Cheshire Homes*: There are five of these in the country. The main function of these homes is to provide a substitute "home" for the physically handicapped children and adults whose parents and relations have difficulty in coping with their conditions or who have been rejected and abandoned by their families. Some of the homes make adequate provisions to ensure that the children attend the ordinary primary schools within easy reach of the homes. Under the UPE, there are plans to provide classrooms on the premises of some of the homes.
- (c) *Hospital Schools*: The Royal Orthopaedic Hospital School in Lagos which is the only one of its type in the country, is organized to provide educational facilities for children who have to remain in hospital for long periods. The Teaching Hospital in Ibadan provides lessons for children admitted at the hospital for periods exceeding two weeks. This is an aspect of special education which requires urgent attention. School children admitted for periods of over six weeks due to various health conditions, require some well organized teaching so as to bridge the gap between hospitalization and return to school.
- (d) *Remand Homes and Approved Schools*: These are currently under the State Ministries of Health and Social Welfare. Delinquent or maladjusted children whose behaviour constitutes a threat to other children or to society, are sent into these institutions for periods ranging from three months to one year. A large percentage of these children have already been to school and they require educational programmes for the duration of their stay. At present, formal education which is being provided in these institutions is inadequate in most of them and so children who had been at school have to repeat classes after their discharge. Some of these schools provide facilities for pre-school handicapped children but these are very few to meet the demands at this level of education.

## 10. Supportive Services

In planning and executing Special Education programmes, the co-operation of the Ministries of Health and Social Welfare is indispensable.

Children who need special attention ought to be examined and registered early before they are due to start formal education. Thereafter, other agencies would provide follow up services after formal education, including those that would need vocational training or rehabilitation. At present, there are only two Child Guidance Clinics (at Lagos and Ibadan University Hospitals) that offer services on assessemnt of therapeutic and remedial facilities for the handicapped children.

In most cases identification of handicaps is by rule of thumb. The registration of handicapped children for admission into special and ordinary primary schools under the UPE Scheme seems to be the only authentic estimation of the number of school-age handicapped children. The figures returned by 15 out of the 19 states showed a total of 10,507 handicapped children and youths aged between 6 years and 18 years. Of these, 8,439 are aged between 6 and 12 years. At least one such clinic should be set up in each state. Even if funds are available to set up these clinics immediately, the problem of securing trained personnel for them will remain.

### **11. Special Equipment and Books**

Another problematic area in special education planning is the provision of equipment. Special equipment is expensive to obtain and even more expensive to maintain. In countries that have limited funds for general education, even less funds are available to service special education. Much of the equipment is purchased from the industrialized countries and it is the experience of developing countries that promises of after-sale services are not often honoured. There is therefore everywhere expensive equipment that is in disrepair simply because there is limited technical knowhow. It is therefore necessary that technician training in developing countries should take cognisance of this important area. Also developing countries should make special efforts to establish their own presses and audiovisual aids production units for text books and less sophisticated items in order to reduce some of the overhead costs. Through the kind cooperation of the Royal Society for the Blind, Nigeria is able to purchase equipment and materials at very reasonable costs.

### **12. Future Trends**

As can be seen from the foregoing, special education in Nigeria is still in its embryonic stage. However, a good beginning has been made in what we consider to be along the right direction. In future, we shall be guided by the provisions on special education as enunciated in the new National Policy on Education adopted in 1977. Along with the Universal Free Primary Education Scheme (UPE) launched in September 1976, these two schemes constitute the major milestone in the education of handicapped children in Nigeria. The implication of the UPE for Special Education is that for the first time in the history of educational planning in Nigeria, the Federal Government, in co-operation with the State Governments, is committed to providing educational facilities for handicapped children of all categories. Future

development in the area of Special Education will be guided by the aims and objectives as spelt out in Section 8 of the National Policy on Education thus:

- (a) to give concrete meaning to the idea of equalizing educational opportunities for all children, their physical, mental, emotional disabilities notwithstanding;
- (b) to provide adequate education for all handicapped children and adults in order that they may fully play their roles in the development of the nation;
- (c) to provide opportunities for exceptionally gifted children to develop at their own pace in the interest of the nation's economic and technological development.

To realize these aims and objectives, the following steps, among these have been agreed upon:

- (a) Gradual expansion of the Federal Advanced Teachers' College for Special Education established in 1977 would have an output of 500 students by 1980.
- (b) Inclusion of some aspects of Special Education in the course content of all teacher training colleges. This would make it possible for all trained teachers to possess some basic knowledge of Special Education to enable them to identify and assist the handicapped children who are enrolled in normal primary schools.
- (c) A committee to coordinate Special Education activities would be set up by the Federal Ministry of Education in collaboration with the Ministries of Health, Social Welfare and Labour.
- (d) Universities would receive government funds to develop departments of Special Education and to organize in-service training courses in Special Education.
- (e) Accurate census of all handicapped children and adults by age, by sex, by locality and by type.
- (f) In consultation with appropriate bodies, Ministries of Education would provide Special programmes for gifted children, but these would be within the normal educational set-up.
- (g) A National Council on Special Education would be set up and its composition would reflect the collective responsibility of the Ministry of Education, Labour, Health and Social Welfare in the provision of facilities for the care and education of handicapped children.
- (h) Children's clinics would be attached to hospitals for early identification of handicapped children, and for curative measures and medical care before and after they reach the age for primary education.

In conclusion, the new National Policy on Education emphasizes the Government's belief that education for the handicapped is *not* a kind

of contribution to charity, and that our national aim is to develop every Nigerian to his highest ability. When the policy is fully implemented, Nigeria will take its rightful place among the nations of the world, providing adequate and meaningful educational programmes for her handicapped population.

## PROFESSIONAL COOPERATION

### THE WORK OF THE AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF WORKERS FOR THE BLIND

by Jerry Dunlap, President, AAWB

An invitation to present a paper at a meeting of the World Council for the Welfare of the Blind is an exciting, humbling, and a challenging experience. Preparation of this article has provided an opportunity to explore some fascinating history and numerous occasions to discuss contemporary issues with professional colleagues. The writing has been a rewarding experience personally, and it is hoped that the following discussion will provide greater insight into the activities and purposes of the American Association of Workers for the Blind.

Founded in 1895, AAEB is a membership organization for agencies and professional workers in the blindness system, plus interested individuals throughout the Americas. Traditionally, the Association has provided leadership on social and legislative actions and forcefully spoken out on issues confronting the blind. Today, AAWB conducts seminars and workshops at local, regional and national levels to co-ordinate and stimulate agencies and workers for the blind for enhancement of professional skills, services and standards. Its constitution states: "The purpose of the American Association of Workers for the Blind shall be to render all possible assistance in the promotion, development and improvement of services to blind persons in the Americas and the insular possessions of the United States . . ." (1) In the following pages, an effort will be made to depict how the Association continues to fulfil that purpose.

Prior to consideration of AAWB's role in promoting cooperation among the various disciplines serving the blind, it would seem germane to briefly explore the state of the art in work for the blind in the United States. A thorough exploration of the vast and complex service delivery system for the blind in this country is beyond the scope of this paper. However, to understand the necessity for and the difficulty of co-ordinating professional activities, it should be realized that there are hundreds of agencies and thousands of professional staff in the blindness system. Professional activities in this field evolved from scattered private philanthropies of the early nineteenth century, but only gained momentum in the past sixty years. Perhaps the unique feature of the system in the United States is the ongoing partnership between the philanthropic voluntary programmes and the ever increasing tax supported services.

Today, the lives of virtually all blind persons are affected by a vast array of services emanating from a variety of programmes administered by hundreds of voluntary agencies and many governmental agencies; e.g. Veterans Administration; Office of Education, Bureau for Education of the Handicapped; Health, Education, and Welfare;



Rehabilitation Services Administration, Office for the Blind and Visually Handicapped; Social Security Administration; Library of Congress, Division for the Blind and Physically Handicapped; and American Printing House for the Blind. This listing does not include every federal agency providing services to blind individuals, and in addition there are state and local tax supported services; however, unlike many nations in the world, the United States has more private voluntary agencies in the blindness system than it has public programmes.

This large number of agencies, both public and private, provide the full gamut of services ranging from genetic counselling and infant stimulation to research projects for the geriatric blind. There are programmes which conduct research to determine the needs of blind persons, other programmes which attempt to serve those needs, and still other programmes which evaluate the degree of success that services have met needs. Despite this apparent plethora of agencies and services, there exist blind individuals with unmet needs, and segments of the blind population who are underserved in this nation. Undoubtedly, a challenge remains to improve and expand the service delivery system in this country.

The complex and sometimes confusing service programmes for the blind did not just happen. These services grew out of demonstrated needs and the efforts of many persons to meet those needs.

Organized service programmes for the blind can be traced to the pioneering efforts of Dr. Samuel Gridley Howe, who founded the Perkins School in the 1830's. The same decade saw the development of two other residential schools, New York Institute in New York City and the Overbrook School in Philadelphia. These early schools, begun as private philanthropic projects by visionary leaders, not only demonstrated the fact that blind children could be educated, but moreover, proved the need for residential schools and other educational programmes for blind children across the country. These early model programmes stimulated public support and, today, there is federal legislation mandating the education of all handicapped children, including the blind, in the least restrictive environment.

Following his success in establishing a school for blind children, Samuel Gridley Howe turned his energy to ameliorating the employment problem faced by blind adults. He began the first workshop for the blind in Boston in 1840, and several others followed. These early shops developed as "working homes" and, as early as 1849, Dr. Howe became concerned about the segregating nature of such a facility. (2) This initial effort, begun as a demonstration project, did prove that blind people could be productive; however, it fell short of placing blind persons into competitive employment.

Samuel Howe joined other educators in 1879 to obtain passage of the first federal legislation specifically benefitting the blind. This legislation, entitled "An Act to Promote the Education of the Blind", provided ten thousand dollars of federal funds for the provision of books and educational materials for blind children. The act represented one

additional achievement, i.e. for the first time commitment of federal tax revenue to provide direct services to blind persons.

In the latter part of the nineteenth century, work for the blind had progressed; however, opportunities for advanced education and competitive employment outside of workshops were quite limited. In an effort to solve these problems, a group of concerned persons met at St. Louis, Missouri, in 1885, and formed the forerunner of AAWB. This early organization, known as the American Blind Peoples Higher Education and General Improvement Association, met to consider methods whereby the blind might improve their opportunities for advancement in society.

The prime objective of this early association was to develop means for blind persons to gain entrance into programmes of higher education. In his history of AAWB, Dr. Norman Yoder describes four approaches considered by the association:

- “1. A specialized college to serve the blind
2. Governmental scholarships for the blind
3. Non-segregating admission to existing institutions of higher learning
4. The annex theory, which was a combination of the first two suggestions; namely, that scholarships be provided and a segregated unit be established in an existing college or university specifically designed to meet the needs of the blind.” (3)

Within its first decade, the American Blind Peoples Higher Education and General Improvement Association had been renamed the American Association of Workers for the Blind, and had appointed major committees on higher education; federal pensions; uniform system of embossed type; and prevention of blindness, this committee later to become the National Society for the Prevention of Blindness. Therefore, in something over ten years, the rules in the foundation of AAWB were laid—“a concern for the problems of people, with the further thought of arriving at a solution to those problems through study, research, and an awareness that some of these solutions could be accomplished only through positive and constructive legislative action.” (3)

By the turn of the century, residential schools were widespread; workshops and working homes were increasing and at least one state, Connecticut, had established a Commission for the Blind. Other states soon followed Connecticut's lead and work for the blind entered the twentieth century with schools, workshops and Commissions for the Blind in most states. The foundations had been laid for many of the large multi-service voluntary agencies that exist today, and at least the embryonic stage had been reached in achieving tax supported service programmes for the blind.

AAWB continued to grow in its scope of interest with each biennial meeting. By 1915, the Association conducted a joint meeting with the American Association of Instructors for the Blind, and continued work on standardizing embossed type. At this conference, a proposal was made to establish a National Industries for the Blind. This programme

was modelled on its English counterpart, and over the years workshops cooperating with NIB would be responsible for the employment of thousands of blind persons.

In the 1917 convention, AAWB established a legislative committee which began a strong campaign to influence legislation on behalf of the blind. No doubt these efforts were given impetus by the plight of the war blind. Congress reacted by establishing a rehabilitation programme for disabled veterans. This programme was followed by enactment of a rehabilitation programme for civilians in 1920 known as the Smith Fess Act. This act provided \$750,000 for the initial federal appropriation for 1921 with each state sharing dollar for dollar in the cost of rehabilitation. The matching ratio today is four federal dollars for each state dollar, and the federal appropriation is more than a thousand-fold the 1921 figure.

Perhaps one of AAWB's greatest achievements was initiated the following year under the presidency of H. Randolph Latimer. At its biennial convention of 1921, the entire conference was devoted to describing the need for a national clearing house for information on blindness, an organization that could conduct research, and also serve as a national public information programme. The convention unanimously adopted the resolution to establish the American Foundation for the Blind, and H. Randolph Latimer became the Foundation's first executive director. (4)

In the next few years, AAWB concluded negotiations with the British Type Committee and, with the concurrence of AAIB, STANDARD ENGLISH BRAILLE, GRADES I and II was adopted. During these years, AAWB relied heavily on progressive ideas from its Canadian members, and many of the innovations introduced in the work for the blind in the United States originated in Canada. A Committee on Ethics was established, and AAWB recognized that it must have a firm code of ethics. This appears to be the first effort by the Association to establish standards to upgrade professionals in work for the blind.

In the mid 30's the interest group concept was adopted and became the basis for today's organizational structure. The Association continued its legislative involvement with positive results. No decade in history has provided more legislative benefits to the blind than the 1930's. Four major pieces of legislation were passed that impacted the lives of most blind persons in the United States. These included passage of the Pratt-Smoot Act in 1931 which established in the Library of Congress the programme through which blind persons can borrow, without cost, an ever-increasing number of braille and recorded books; the Social Security Act in 1935 which for the first time committed the federal government to participate in the financial support of blind and other disabled persons; the Randolph-Sheppard Act in 1936 which demonstrated the government's conviction that blind persons could successfully manage vending facilities on federal locations; and the Wagner-O'Day Act of 1938 which gave preference to workshops employing blind persons in purchases made by the government. (5)

At its 1941 convention, AAWB accepted a set of standards for the certification of home teachers. A similar certification procedure and



code of ethics would be adopted for the orientation and mobility specialists in 1968. In the early years of World War II, leaders of AAWB, along with other organizations, pressed for expansion of rehabilitation services. This resulted in the passage of the 1943 Barden-LaFollette Act, Public Law 113. This act provided federal vocational rehabilitation funds for the first time to State Commissions for the Blind, and permitted the purchase of services from local agencies. Undoubtedly, this legislation provided the potential for developing good cooperative working relationships between the public and private sectors. That is to say, this Act expanded the state's ability to purchase services for clients, and left to the discretion of the individual states whether to directly provide these services or to purchase them from voluntary organizations. There is no doubt that this shift of the major support of private programmes from philanthropic to public means gave states the right to suggest changes in certain aspects of voluntary programmes. However, the strong financial support by the public agencies and the demonstrated flexibility of voluntary programmes provided a very favourable climate for the development of sound cooperative working relationships. (6)

Subsequent to World War II, AAWB continued its efforts to upgrade the level of professionalism among workers for the blind through seminars and workshops on the evolving rehabilitation centre movement and the new areas of employment being developed by advances in technology. Also, AAWB actively sought governmental support of university based professional training programmes in the areas of social service, orientation and mobility specialists, rehabilitation teachers, rehabilitation counsellors, and placement specialists for the blind. These programmes were developed at many universities across the country and greatly contributed to the level of professionalism of personnel entering the field of work for the blind.

The 1955 conference addressed itself at length to a long-range planning document for the Association. This document is still the basis for much of the organization's current programme. The regionalization concept described in the long-range plan was implemented in the 60's and today has resulted in thirty-one chapters in six regions with a membership of over 3,500.

Another item from the past that merits brief mention is the Seal of Good Practice. Historically, AAWB expressed concern regarding ethical practices of fund raising and delivery of quality services by agencies for the blind. A code of ethics was established and a committee appointed to screen applicant agencies for this Seal of Good Practice. It cannot be claimed that this early effort in accreditation was an overwhelming success; however, it did serve as a forerunner for the Commission on Standards and Accreditation of Services for the Blind. This commission (COMSTAC) eventually resulted in the formation of the National Accreditation Council. Today, AAWC is a sponsoring member of NAC.

AAWB, along with other organizations of and for the blind, has actively promoted the passage of a number of amendments to the original Rehabilitation Act. Perhaps the most significant changes were

made in the 1973 Rehabilitation Act with its 1974 Amendments. AAWB and all other organizations of and for the blind can justifiably be proud of their role in passage of this law.

In addition to measurably strengthening the vending facility programme for the blind, the law provides disabled persons including the blind the right of access to training and employment through removal or modification of architectural and attitudinal barriers. The individual's right to fully participate in planning his programme of services is mandated. These affirmative action and consumer's rights provisions of the law represent some of the most forward-thinking legislation in the history of rehabilitation services.

In 1974, AAWB Board of Directors accepted a report from the Regionalization Committee which recommended in part that the association encourage an interdisciplinary approach to problems of services to blind persons through the maximum use of knowledge and skills of all related professions. (7) It was recommended that a directory of allied service agencies including services for the blind be developed and distributed to AAWB members. The report further recommended that AAWB assist in the development of professional services to blind persons. Several methods for implementation were suggested including sponsorship of inservice training institutes or seminars. In addition, it was recommended that agencies conducting inservice training seminars should assure that programme content is inclusive of all interest group areas encompassed by AAWB. Another recommendation was that AAWB incorporate workshops at national level conferences. This latter recommendation has been implemented in the last three national biennial conferences.

Time does not permit a complete account of the history of AAWB. Suffice it to say, it has continued to be in the forefront of social and legislative changes that affected the lives of blind persons. Also, the association has continued its efforts toward enhancing professionalism among workers and coordination of their activities toward the best interests of those individuals being served. There are certain structural characteristics and activities of AAWB that have a direct bearing on professional development and coordination of various disciplines involved in work for the blind. The following sections will briefly describe some of these areas of activity.

A recent effort of the Board of Directors to promote professional development in the field of work for the blind was the establishment of the Douglas C. MacFarland Memorial Fund in memory of a great leader. Dr. Douglas C. MacFarland twice served AAWB as president and gave unstintingly to improve the quality of life of blind persons around the world. The purpose of the fund is to provide a financial base for encouraging educational programmes for career development. Eventually it may be possible to also assist with the expense of bringing outstanding leaders in the field of blindness to regional and local AAWB meetings.

The fact that AAWB is structured in interest groups facilitates professional cooperation and stimulates programmes for professional growth. Members have the option of joining one of the existing 14



interest groups or forming a new interest group. The constitution provides that fifty members in good standing may petition the Board of Directors for the right to initiate a new interest group. These interest groups represent virtually every speciality in the field of blindness and meet concurrent with each biennial convention. Interest group representatives are involved in programme planning for national, regional, and local conferences; and individual interest groups sponsor workshops and seminars in conjunction with AAWB meetings. In addition to the opportunity for professional growth from these interest group seminars, participants are enabled to obtain university credits that can be applied toward maintenance of professional certificates. Perhaps the interest group concept is AAWB's single greatest contribution toward professional development and cooperation of the various disciplines involved in serving the blind in America.

One other means of improving cooperation among the various disciplines and enhancing the knowledge and skills of the individual professional is to keep each member abreast on current events. Toward this end, AAWB produces a quarterly newsletter that describes organizational activities and alerts members to national issues. Also, since 1927, convention proceedings have been published and made available to each member. An AAWB annual, "Blindness", has been published since 1964 which provides a forum wherein leading exponents can discuss various facets of work for the blind. "Blindness" is also made available in braille and recorded form by the Library of Congress and distributed nationwide through Regional Libraries for the Blind and Physically Handicapped. Members share some publications from the American Foundation for the Blind and are entitled to a discounted subscription to the Journal of Blindness and Visual Impairment.

The practice of certifying competency of a professional against a set of standards developed by peers is a most effective means of assuring quality service delivery to prospective clients. For many years Rehabilitation Teachers, Interest Group II in AAWB, have followed this practice. Orientation and Mobility Specialists, Interest Group 9, developed parallel standards for certification in 1968; and five years later, Interest Group 9 adopted a code of ethics for practitioners in peripatology. The implementation of a process of certifying competency in these disciplines represents a strong contribution toward the development of professional personnel. Certification not only serves the individual professional but provides assurance to the employing agency and protection to the general public. The results of these programmes have been quite positive and AAWB is presently studying the feasibility of three additional areas for certification, i.e. administrators, vocational counsellors, and low vision specialists.

The most effective means of fostering professional development is to stimulate interaction and communication. This is best achieved through direct dialogue at local, regional, and national level conferences. Since its inception, AAWB has come together as a body in conventions to discuss issues, to resolve differences, to learn new concepts, and to spearhead new frontiers of service. Perhaps the single most valuable

return on AAWB membership is the opportunity to attend its conventions, to hear presentations from international leaders in the field and to exchange viewpoints with colleagues from all across the United States and Canada. Each chapter affiliate conducts an annual meeting, and national and regional conferences are on alternate bienniums. This provides at least two opportunities each year for members to participate in a planned programme of information on current activities in work for the blind.

AAWB is concerned with professional cooperation on yet another level; that is, furthering joint activities with its counterpart in education, the Association for Education of the Visually Handicapped. The advantage of close cooperation of these two associations has long been recognized. In 1913, AAWB appointed a committee to develop a joint meeting with AEVH's predecessor, the American Association of Instructors for the Blind. The joint meeting was successfully held in 1915, and a second joint conference of the two organizations was conducted in 1952. Subsequently the two organizations have joined forces on numerous projects including sponsorship with the National Braille Association of the Braille Authority of North America. (In 1976 sponsorship of the Braille Authority was extended to nine additional organizations of and for the blind which provides a more adequate financial base for this important activity.) The two associations have a standing joint committee on orientation and mobility certification and continue to work toward improved cooperative efforts in critical areas of service. At present, planning is under way for joint meetings at the Helen Keller Congress scheduled for June 1980. The president of each association has appointed representatives to a committee that is charged with the task of exploring ways and means of achieving an even closer working relationship that may eventually lead to a coalition. Undoubtedly, two organizations possessing so many parallel interests and common objectives will find it mutually beneficial to cooperate even more closely in the future which can only strengthen their impact on work for the blind.

In the preceding pages, there has been an attempt to give a brief picture of the service delivery system for the blind in America, and how this system of public and voluntary services welded into a working partnership. AAWB's participation in the development of professional services and standards was briefly reviewed. In addition, there has been an effort to delineate how professional cooperation is the work of AAWB. Cooperation has been achieved in many ways; however, perhaps the most effective and lasting means of achieving cooperation has been focusing the strength, talent, and dedication of many disciplines on the target of improving the lives of blind persons throughout this nation.

In conclusion, it can safely be said that professional cooperation is not only the work of AAWB but, moreover, without the cooperation of myriad professionals there would literally not be an American Association of Workers for the Blind.

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# **THE WORK OF THE LATIN AMERICAN ORGANIZATION FOR THE PROMOTION OF THE BLIND AND VISUALLY IMPAIRED**

by Hernando Pradilla Cobos, Vice-President

## **Introduction**

Mr. President, Officers, Delegates, Observers, Ladies and Gentlemen. On behalf of the Board of the Latin American Organization for the Promotion of the Blind and Visually Impaired I am going to tell you about something new which has occurred in Latin America during this period of five years, but that has its roots in the past. It is about the Organization we have built up for the promotion of the visually handicapped, and in which all the resources in the field are joined to really make a great effort towards the improvement of the condition of those who do not see as others do. It is a long story. However, I am going to summarize as much as possible to give you a clear idea of what we have done.

## **A Look at the Past**

In different gatherings previous to 1971, Latin American professionals in the field suggested forming an association of workers for the blind, during private conversations and meetings. In 1971, in Bogota, during the Constitutive Assembly of the Ibero-American Association of Printing Presses for the Visually Deficient, and at the educational conference, sponsored by the American Foundation for Overseas Blind, now Helen Keller International, a special commission was set up to prepare the draft project for organizing the association. However, nothing came of it. Later on, other meetings were held with different purposes and we continued talking about what we had in mind. During the Fifth General Assembly of WCWB, the idea again came to mind, and a meeting was held in São Paulo to discuss it. Structure, objectives, etc. were discussed, but once more nothing was settled. However, during the second congress of the International Rehabilitation Medicine Association, thanks to a very good idea of Mr. Roy Rusk, Director of Rehabilitation at Helen Keller International, a session on the visually handicapped was held and there was a meeting to discuss the creation of the Latin American Committee for Services to the Blind and Visually Deficient. Mr. Roy Rusk, Miss Crespo, Mrs. de Stahl, Dr. Hernandez, Mr. Lorenzo Navarro and myself participated, among others. Meetings with Dr. Smith were also held to prepare the study group meeting for the coming year in Washington. In February 1975 the first study group on Rehabilitation Services and Programmes for Training Personnel for Visually Impaired Persons in Latin America was held in Washington under the sponsorship of WHO, PAHO and HKI, in which Dr. Smith, Mrs. Elisa de Stahl, Miss Susana Crespo, Mrs. Blanca de Garcia, Miss Jurema Venturini, Dr. Gustavo Hernandez, Dr. Richard Hoover and



myself took part. Recommendations to Latin American countries on rehabilitation of the blind and visually deficient were made, and the newly created Latin American Committee for Services to the Blind and Visually Deficient was approved.

During September 1975, under the sponsorship of HKI and INCI, a conference to create the specialized commissions of the Committee was held in Bucaramanga, Colombia. Then an interim Executive Committee was held with the presidents of the six new commissions, at which rules and regulations were drafted. It really was a new departure for services to the blind and visually impaired in the region. Many of the most prominent workers for the blind in Latin America attended and Mr. Harold Roberts, Mr. Roy Rusk, Drs. Roy Kumpe, Richard Hoover, Hindley Smith and others were also present.

The interim Executive Committee of the Latin American Committee for Services to the Blind and Visually Deficient, sponsored by HKI and the Guatemalan Committee for the Blind and Deaf, met the following year in Guatemala to study the organization of the new entity and to draft its statutes and regulations.

Mrs. Elisa de Stahl (President), Mrs. Dorina de Gouvêa Nowill (Vice-President), Dr. Gustavo Hernandez, Mr. Herman Saavedra, Mrs. Blanca de Garcia, Miss Susana Crespo and myself, attended the meeting. Mr. Harold Roberts and Mr. Roy Rusk attended as representatives of HKI.

In this last meeting the problem of the pluralism of organizations for and of the blind in Latin America was brought into the picture. In Bucaramanga something had also been said in this respect. The Latin American Affairs Committee of WCWB, the ICEVH, ADEVIA, the Panamerican Council of the Blind, and the new Latin American Committee for Services to the Blind and Visually Deficient were all too many for offering good programmes and a good future to the visually impaired.

During the Riyadh Executive Committee meeting, the officers of WCWB, Mrs. de Stahl, Mrs. Nowill and I participated in a meeting to study the problem, after the report of the chairman of the Latin American Affairs Committee and of the President of the interim Executive Committee of the Latin American Committee for Services to the Blind and Visually Deficient. The meeting concluded that Mr. Eric Boulter should represent the World Council at the forthcoming São Paulo Congress and efforts should be made to coordinate the WCWB Committee and the new organization and to create one single agency.

In October 1977 the first Latin American Congress of WCWB was held in São Paulo, sponsored by WCWB, HKI, ONCE, Christoffel Blindenmission and the Foundation for the Book of the Blind in Brazil. This was a professional and administrative Congress in which some 400 professionals participated.

Professional sessions on rehabilitation, education, social, cultural and psychological services, orientation and mobility, prevention of blindness, were given. Meetings of the Latin American Affairs Committee, of the interim Executive Committee of the Latin American Committee for Services to the Blind and Visually Deficient, joint



sessions of the two committees, conference of ADEVIA, reunions of special commissions, and of the specialized permanent commissions created in Bucaramanga followed, one after the other or celebrated simultaneously, all of them programmed to plan for the future of the visually limited of Latin America. Then the Latin American Organization for the Promotion of the Blind and Visually Impaired (OLAP), was created and completely structured.

The Statutes for OLAP, By-laws for the Latin American Affairs Committee (Administrative Division) and for the Professional Division, By-laws for the General Assembly of OLAP and for all the seven specialized permanent commissions were revised and approved, and plans were made for the coming five years.

## **Organization**

I am not going to give here the whole information concerning this matter, for it can be consulted in the annex of the Statutes of OLAP. I want to point out, however, that we think this organization was the best solution for the problems of duplication and pluralism of organizations for the blind and the visually impaired in the region.

The new OLAP is composed of two divisions, one Administrative, the other Professional. The first is the Latin American Affairs Committee, the second is like an association of workers for the blind. This last one is composed of seven specialized permanent commissions: Social Work, Psychological Services, Orientation and Mobility, Education, Rehabilitation, Prevention of Blindness, and Cultural. Each one has its own By-laws and programs for operation. The two divisions have their own Boards, which are responsible to the general Board. Mrs. Dorina de Gouvêa Nowill is the President, Mrs. Elisa de Stahl is the Secretary General, I am the Vice-President and seven more members participate in its decisions.

## **A Look to the Future**

This Latin American Organization for the Promotion of the Blind and the Visually Impaired is considered to be an organization for and of the blind to work for the visually limited of the Latin America and the Caribbean region. We expect it to encompass all the regional associations or organizations for and of the blind or get into co-ordination with them. OLAP will be the accreditation center for the services for the visually limited of the region, and will serve as research and consultation center in the different fields of interest of work for the blind. We expect all the professionals to become members and offer their services without high economic demands, or without any, for the betterment of this exceptional group in this area. OLAP will really be what we needed for our countries, and for the integration of the region to work jointly and challengingly for ourselves and for others.

Thank you very much for this wonderful occasion to tell you what we have done, what we are going to do, and how you can help us to help our visually limited population. If you help us to help ourselves to help others, we will be aiding the millions of citizens of the region for the future in America.

## **PROFESSIONAL SESSION 5**

### **COOPERATION IN ACHIEVING INDEPENDENCE**

Friday evening, August 3, 1979

Chairman: Dr. Helmut Pielasch

German Democratic Republic

### **REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON SPORT ACTIVITIES**

by Dr. Helmut Pielasch, Chairman

For some time now there has been a growing realization that physical exercise and sport are important for the health and fitness of everyone. With each passing decade, governments and voluntary organizations pay greater attention to sport, successful athletes enjoy great respect and have a strong influence on the public. Physical exercise and sport play an important part in the curricula of all schools. The aim is not to make every child and student able to participate in competitive sport, but to awaken a need for regular physical exercise in each individual. This desire is already widespread and it is supported by the authorities and communities through provision of sport and leisure centres, indoor swimming pools, special walking tours and camping grounds. And all this is also, of course, available for the blind.

Regular sport activities help rehabilitation of blind persons and are very valuable for health, the capacity for work and mobility. They become more confident in themselves. Even multi-handicapped blind people can practise sport regularly and enjoy its stimulative effect.

In several countries it is now taken as a matter of course that blind athletes exist and comprehensive experience has been gained in this field. It was realized that international contacts were necessary to further develop national sport for the blind. The Executive Committee of the World Council discussed this question and at its meeting in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, in 1977 decided to form a Sports Committee. Dr. Dr. Helmut Pielasch, GDR, was appointed Chairman.

So far the Committee has had three meetings: in December 1977 in Berlin, GDR, in October 1978 in Philadelphia, USA, and in April 1979 in Belgrade, Yugoslavia. At each meeting the host organizations created favourable conditions which did much to contribute to their success.

At the meetings, the given situation in sport was assessed in the various regions, proposals were discussed to unify regulations and cooperation with ISOD was prepared.

The work of the Committee is supported by three sub-committees. These are:

1. Sub-Committee for light athletics, chaired by Jan Remplewicz, Poland,
2. Sub-Committee for swimming and aquatic sports, chaired by Arthur E. Copeland, USA,
3. Sub-Committee for winter and other sports, chaired by Arvo Karvinen, Finland.

The Committee has set itself a number of tasks. The first is to support the Regional Committees in forming sports commissions. At present such sports commissions exist in the regions of Europe, Asia, North America-Oceania and South America. The Committee then prepared the International Symposium on Sport for the Blind to be held from April 17 to 19, 1979 in Belgrade, Yugoslavia. Experts spoke about the close relations between sport for blind people and general sport. They also discussed the role played by schools in developing a need for regular sports activity. They made suggestions about competition regulations for various types of sport already being practised by the blind and proposed other types which have proved themselves in the national field. It was agreed that blind people, too, have a whole range of so far unused possibilities for doing competitive sport. At the same time, multi-handicapped blind of all age groups, including older blind people, can experience the benefit of sport. We are convinced that sport for the blind in the various countries received much impetus through this Symposium. Another of the Committee's tasks is the propagation of sport. To this end, the Secretariat of the European Regional Committee issued a special number of the "Review of the European Blind" devoted entirely to questions of sport. The number appeared in Autumn 1978 and thanks to a bigger edition, all organizations of and for the blind plus many governments were able to receive it. The propagation of sport is closely linked with the popularization of other types of sport and team games. And here it is necessary to use the treasury of rich experience gathered in several countries.

Finally, the Committee discussed the necessity to standardize competition regulations. Here it was able to use the work already done by the Sports Commission of the ERC and by several countries. This work is not yet final, but the discussion showed that in cooperation with ISOD it will very soon lead to generally acceptable results. And this takes us to the important question of cooperation with ISOD.

ISOD has been active for a number of years. At present it has 30 national member organizations. In view of the fact that ISOD works in many countries and has a longer tradition, an agreement was signed between WCWB and ISOD at the 1st European Games for the Blind in Poznan in August 1977. The Presidents of both organizations, Boris Zimin and Sir Ludwig Guttmann, signed the document which stipulates equal cooperation in the field of sport for the blind. The agreement also laid down that a technical committee with equal membership from both organizations be formed to clarify any outstanding problems. This

means that ISOD and WCWB now acknowledge realities and the Sports Committee is very optimistic about all further cooperation.

The first meeting of the technical committee was held on December 9-10, 1978 in Warsaw. A long agenda was dealt with in an atmosphere of mutual confidence. In its future work, the Committee will take the view of eye doctors and coaches more into account. Questions of classification were also discussed. A number of problems in this field are to be gradually solved after 1980, because then the lessons of the Olympic Summer Games can be taken into consideration. The Olympic Games of the Disabled are a great demonstration of what disabled people are capable of and has a strong effect on the public. The Games are being organized by ISOD, and the Sports Committee will support ISOD as far as it is able to do so.

Now let us turn to those tasks which the Committee has set itself up to 1984.

1. The Committee will promote the already existing Sports Commissions in the Regional Committees and offer its support for formation of further Sports Commissions.
2. The Committee will continue to consolidate cooperation with ISOD and, as part of this, will work in the joint WCWB/ISOD Committee, to work out standard competition regulations, lay down safety measures for blind sport and gather information about records set up by blind athletes.
3. The Committee will organize seminars for the exchange of experience in the field of sport.
4. Support for regional and national sports events.
5. Organize exchange of information about suitable sports.
6. Promotion of sport propagation and popularization of various types of sport and team games suitable for visually handicapped.

The Sports Committee is the ninth and also the youngest Committee of the World Council. It began its activities only a few years ago but already enjoys the support of many organizations of and for the blind for which it expresses its gratitude to all those responsible. Together we will succeed in gaining new friends for sport among blind people of all ages.



## AIMS OF SPORT FOR THE DISABLED

by Sir Ludwig Guttmann, C.B.E., F.R.S.

President, International Sports Organization for the Disabled (ISOD)  
and International Stoke Mandeville Games Federation (ISMGF)

Sport has been defined by UNESCO as "Any physical activity which has the character of play and which involves a struggle with oneself or with others, or a confrontation with natural elements is sport. If this activity involves competition it must be performed with a spirit of sportsmanship. There can be no true sport without fair play. All rules must be observed with this in mind".

Recreational activities in one way or another are playing an ever increasing part in the life of the individual, as well as of society as a whole. Consequently, the demand for greater variety in recreation and more adequate facilities for sport has dramatically increased in recent years, and this applies today as much to the disabled as it does to the able-bodied in the community.

### **The Physically Handicapped and the World Around Him**

In order to understand the beneficial effects of sport on the severely disabled it is worth while to examine the disabled person's position in the world around him.

(a) *Attitude of Society towards the Disabled:* It is an undeniable fact that, for thousands of years, the attitude of society towards the severely physically disabled was basically negative. The two world wars with their millions of disabled have certainly changed this attitude. In particular, the introduction of the modern concepts of rehabilitation after the Second World War has resulted in a positive approach and attitude towards the severely disabled, who are now increasingly accepted as part of the community.

(b) *The Attitude of the Disabled towards the Community:* It must be remembered that any severe injury or disease resulting in severe disability upsets to a greater or lesser degree the precision, economy and course of the normal movement patterns of the body. The realization and sudden awareness of the changed body-image resulting from the abnormal patterns of movement is often the cause of a psychological tension between the severely disabled person and his surrounding world, which makes social contact with his able-bodied fellowmen difficult and sometimes even impossible.

### **The Significance and Aims of Sport for the Blind and other Disabled**

It is not difficult, therefore, to understand why sport is of even greater significance for the well-being of the severely disabled than it is for the able-bodied.



Broadly speaking, the aims of sport embody the same principles for the disabled as they do for the able-bodied; in addition, however, sport is of immense therapeutic value and plays an essential part in the physical, psychological and social rehabilitation of the disabled. The aims of sport for the disabled can be classified as follows:

(a) *Sport as a Curative Factor*: Sport represents the most natural form of remedial exercise and can be successfully employed to complement the conventional methods of physical therapy. Blindness as such, unless it is associated with other disabilities, does not affect the general fitness of the individual. However, there are some specific changes of the normal pattern of blind individuals, both young and adult, which include loss or decrease of free movement in space. The aims of physical education and sport are, in the first place, to encourage and promote the development of readjustment forces in the nervous system, in particular the sense of orientation in space. In teaching free and co-ordinated movements and early sporting activities, walking, running in a straight line over gradually increasing distances, bowling and swimming are most helpful in this respect. Psychologically, sporting activities undoubtedly help the blind person to come to terms with his inner tensions and bring him out of his isolation. They bring him a new frame of mind with self-confidence, competitive spirit, contact with his fellows and, eventually, with the world around him. The more emphasis laid in the early stages of blindness on free physical training and various sporting activities the more will the blind person continue with sport as recreation for his well-being later when he is at home and in employment.

(b) *The Recreational and Psychological Value of Sport*: However, sport for the disabled has a deeper meaning than being merely a form of physiotherapy. The great advantage of sport over formal remedial exercise lies in its recreational value, which represents an additional motivation by restoring that passion for playful activity and the desire to experience joy and pleasure in life, so deeply inherent in any human being. There is no doubt that much of the benefit of sport, as a form of rehabilitation, is lost if the disabled person does not derive pleasure from its recreational value. Thus, recreation becomes an important factor in promoting that psychological equilibrium which enables the disabled to come to terms with his physical defect. The aims of sport are to develop in the disabled activity of mind, self-confidence, self-dignity, self-discipline, competitive spirit and comradeship—mental attitudes which are essential for getting the disabled person out of the ghetto of self-centred isolation.

(c) *Sport as a Means of Social Re-integration*: One of the most important aims of sport for the disabled is to restore his contact with the world around him; in other words, to facilitate and accelerate his social reintegration. There are certain sports where the disabled are capable of competing with the able-bodied. Bowls is one of these sports, and it is fascinating to watch the skill of a completely blind bowler in placing his woods near to the Jack, guided by the caller. As the game of bowls is usually played in a club which has its own clubhouse and bar, the social reintegration is usually continued and enhanced after the game

is over. Some disabled have even been known to fall in love with and later marry someone they have met for the first time at a sports meeting for the disabled—surely the ultimate in social reintegration through sport!

(d) *Sport as Organized Competition*: During the Second World War, as Founder Director of the National Spinal Injuries Centre at Stoke Mandeville Hospital, England, I had the opportunity to introduce sport as a therapeutic and recreational measure in the treatment and rehabilitation of spinal cord injured patients, who throughout centuries had been given up by the medical profession as hopeless cripples, doomed to an early death. The success of sport as remedial exercise and clinical treatment provided the incentive to start a sports movement of the paralysed, and it was on July 28, 1948 that the Stoke Mandeville Games were started with only 16 British ex-members of the Armed forces (14 men and 2 women) as competitors, as a demonstration to the public that competitive sport is not the prerogative of the able-bodied but that the severely disabled can also become sportsmen and sports-women in their own right. Today, the Stoke Mandeville Games for the Paralysed of the International Stoke Mandeville Games Federation (ISMGF) are a world-wide sports movement, taking place annually at Stoke Mandeville Sports Stadium, except in the Olympic Years when they are part of the Olympics of the Disabled.

With the founding of the International Sports Organization for the Disabled (ISOD), international games have been held on an increasing basis for other disabilities—amputees and blind in particular. ISOD national member organizations have developed their own national sports programmes and introduced training and coaching programmes and held international events, using classifications and rules set up by ISOD. In 1976, ISOD joined with the ISMGF in sponsoring the Olympic Games for the Disabled, held in Toronto, Canada, which included amputees, blind and spinal cord injured. That same year, amputees and blind took part in the Winter Olympics of the Disabled held in Sweden. At the end of this month, ISOD will hold multi-disabled games—for amputees, blind and cerebral palsy—at Stoke Mandeville as a trial run for the 1980 Olympics for the Disabled.

Thus, another dimension has been added to the aims of sport for the disabled. For, the aim to reach such a standard that one can represent one's club in national games or even one's country at international level is indeed a powerful motivation to any disabled athlete in overcoming a severe disability, and the fulfilment of such an aim one of the highest pinnacles in his or her social reintegration.

### **International Cooperation**

The theme of this Congress is Cooperation. Many fine phrases and pious resolutions are made in the world today about cooperation, but, alas, we all know that it is much more difficult when it comes to putting them into practice. This applies equally to sport for the disabled. Yet, not to succeed would only bring disunity into the whole sports movement of the disabled, with our disabled fellowmen finishing up as the

sufferers. WCWB and ISOD made the first important step in co-operation in sport for the blind when WCWB President Colonel Zimin and I, as President of ISOD signed the Protocol in Poznan, Poland, during the First European Games for the Blind held under WCWB/ISOD combined patronage. We must continue to seek ways to co-operate not only on an international but also at national level, to ensure harmony and cooperation in sport for all disabled. We must seek to ensure that all countries implement the United Nations Charter of the Rights of the Disabled—which means that participation in international sport is open to *all* disabled in *all* countries of the world, irrespective of race, religion or politics, in accordance with the constitutions and principles of both the International Sports Organization for the Disabled and the International Stoke Mandeville Games Federation; so that through our international sports movement of the disabled we achieve perhaps the noblest aim of all—the furthering of friendship and understanding amongst nations.

# **LONG CANE TECHNIQUE— ORIENTATION AND MOBILITY SERVICES**

by J. K. Holdsworth, M.B.E., M.A.

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## **Introduction**

This paper aims to give a brief introduction into the use of the long cane technique as part of the process of orientation and mobility tuition for blind and visually impaired people. It comments on the training of those who are to teach orientation and mobility skills and gives some examples of adaptations of the system to different situations.

## **History**

The possibilities for independent travel by blind and visually impaired people have increased very greatly since the mid-1940's when the long cane technique was developed as the basis for orientation and mobility tuition.

John Malamazian (1970) outlines the early history of programmes of staff training at the Hines Hospital, US Veterans Administration. He gives some insight into the philosophy and emerging practice which led to today's world-wide acceptance of well grounded orientation and mobility teaching.

Evidence of the extent of this expansion is provided by Donald Blasch (1971) and since that date the philosophy, training, and practice embodied in what is known as the long cane technique has continued to expand into Europe, Asia, South America and Africa (Holdsworth 1979).

## **Orientation and Mobility Services**

The use of this term, long cane technique, may in itself mislead if its use tends to imply that cane technique is all that is necessary to achieve the objectives of safe, confident, purposeful, effective and independent travel for blind and visually impaired people. It is of course the use of the cane itself which is the most readily visible and evident part of the whole process of orientation and mobility but in some ways that evident part expresses only the iceberg tip.

The linkage of the term orientation with that of mobility is deliberate and vital. Before a person can move from one point to another, he must know where the first point is and where the second point is in relation to the first, and where he is in relation to both. Orientation is a dynamic process (Ball, 1964), as with movement the surroundings change in relation to the mover. Thus orientation has been defined as "the process of utilizing the remaining senses in establishing one's



position and relationship to all other significant objectives in one's environment" (Widerberg, Kaarlela, 1970). The process and skills of orientation are then the unseen part of that iceberg which also includes the understanding of spatial concepts, motivation, cultural and societal values, the development of the individual's sensory processes and finally the individual's self esteem.

### **The Use of the Long Cane**

The long cane in itself is only a tool to aid independent movement and travel. It is only good in so far as it helps the user accomplish something (Ball, op. cit.). It is effective in so far as it is used appropriately in any particular environment. Briefly the long cane technique is a formalized method of using a specialized cane to give the user information about the ground ahead of him by monitoring the place where his next step will fall.

The advantages of a well thought out system of independent travel have been set out by Hoover (1950).

1. It provides an objective which is so important in stimulating and maintaining interest during a learning process.
2. It provides material for the instructors with which to work in an intelligent and efficient manner.
3. It does away with the trial and error method which in the hands of the inexperienced usually results in more harm than good.
4. It provides a framework which would allow the accumulation, sifting, and dispersing of knowledge to a larger group.
5. It is the inspiration for further research interpretation and adoption of better techniques and systems.
6. By systematizing and planning many important aids so useful in foot travel might well be brought under one head and thus propagated and disseminated in a more intelligent manner.
7. With a systematic and carefully planned technique instructors may be trained in this skill which previously had been practically unknown.

Hill and Ponder (1976) have produced a thorough guide for practitioners in which detailed attention is given to orientation, sighted guide, self protection, cane skills, outdoor travel, special situations and specifications for the long cane. This publication is likely to be of particular interest for those involved in setting up courses for the training of mobility instructors.

### **Training Orientation and Mobility Instructors**

A key to the development of good orientation and mobility services for blind and visually impaired people is to have well trained and prepared orientation and mobility instructors. Throughout the world courses for mobility instructors, range in length from three months to a twelve months course at post graduate level (European Mobility Booklet, 1976).



“Put in the simplest of terms, the work of the orientation and mobility instructor is to train a visually impaired person to be able to move about with confidence once again. To accomplish this, the instructor trains the person’s remaining senses, including any remaining vision, so that he can detect landmarks and reference points from the sounds, odours, or tactual sensations they provide. Through accurate interpretation and correct use of these landmarks, cues, and reference points, a visually impaired person can determine where he is at all times.

In addition to this orientation training, instruction is also given in the use of the long cane. This aid, when used in a systematic way, provides the user with tactile feedback from the surfaces he is walking over, as well as protection from obstacles in his path of travel. It should be pointed out, however, that some persons have sufficient residual sight that training in the use of the long cane is not necessary. Instead they are trained to use their remaining vision and other senses more effectively.

“Just as the physical loss of sight has its psychological, social, personality and economic ramifications, the restoration of mobility in a visually impaired person does more than only restore independent movement. If you accept the dictums that ‘life is movement’ and that ‘without movement one’s ability to participate in life is greatly restricted’, then it could be said that the restoration of mobility skills may also restore such things as personal independence, psychological security, occupational opportunity and increased control over one’s own life.

“What has been described above covers the direct service role of the mobility instructor; that is, his work of providing instruction on a one-to-one basis to visually impaired persons. In addition to his instructor role the orientation and mobility specialist can serve as consultant to other professions. Like anyone else in the community, the visually impaired person needs to call upon the services of medical, paramedical, educational and welfare people. It is, therefore, important that these people have some knowledge of visual impairment, so that they may carry out their roles more competently and more confidently. The nature of the orientation and mobility instructor’s training would enable him to provide just that knowledge.

“A mobility instructor with National Guide Dog & Mobility Training Centre (Royal Guide Dogs for the Blind Associations of Australia) is expected to deliver his specialist service in the community in conjunction with specialist staff from other rehabilitation organizations; thus, the mobility instructor may, from time to time, be part of a team composed of specialists (e.g. occupational therapist, physiotherapist, optometrist, medical doctor, etc.) called together to provide a number of services to a visually impaired person. In this capacity he could act as a consultant on blindness to the team and/or provide orientation and mobility training at the appropriate stage in the visually impaired person’s rehabilitation programme.

“In conclusion, when a person’s sight is reduced to the degree that his everyday life is inconvenienced, it is usually in the area of movement that he experiences the most inconvenience. The orientation and

mobility instructor is equipped by training to lessen that inconvenience considerably by building up a person's confidence in his remaining senses, including remaining vision, and equipping him with suitable aids to compensate for the reduction in vision." (Mullen, 1978)

Although this description was prepared for one particular agency it will probably have some general applicability.

A report prepared for the Mobility Sub-Committee of the World Council for the Welfare of the Blind Standing Committee on Rehabilitation, Training and Employment lists the various countries which carry out instructor training programmes together with the length of course and criteria for acceptance (Holdsworth, 1979).

## **Developing Orientation and Mobility Services**

Countries, agencies or groups considering the establishment or development of orientation and mobility services might well consider comments made by Norman Acton, Director of Rehabilitation International (International Rehabilitation Review 1/79) in which he gave five general principles for the establishment of services—the comments on the principles are those of the author of this paper.

- (i) That the launching of services should not depend upon definitive statistics. In the field of blindness need tends to outstrip the service capacity and this is so particularly in countries where services are in the developing stage. It seems therefore that it may be unwise to devote time and resources in an endeavour to establish the demography of the field of blindness when it may be more practical to realize the need is there and then start to do something about meeting that need by providing even some services.
- (ii) Begin services with general forms of help of practical assistance to people with disability. Mobility as a basic component of rehabilitation services, could well be considered as one of the more general forms of help and thus the provision of mobility services should be early in the list of services to be developed.
- (iii) Draw on existing facilities and use them so that they can assist the disabled person. Even in countries where services are highly developed in quality and quantity, greater use of existing facilities and resources can usually be made (Holdsworth, 1972, 1974). Schools and Health Centres may be used as bases for services for the blind. Where services are developing, itinerant teachers, health workers and even perhaps agricultural advisors may be given sufficient tuition to enable them to provide some basic service to blind people (Westaway, 1979).
- (iv) Make sure that plans for training and utilization of rehabilitation personnel have priority over plans for building and equipment. Appropriate services for blind people do not necessarily depend upon having special rehabilitation centres. Indeed in countries where many blind people live in rural situations a special re-

habilitation centre may be inappropriate as that setting may be so different from the person's usual living situation that learning in a centre could be largely irrelevant. The assumption that learning and skills developed in a rehabilitation centre automatically transfer to the person's home situation can be challenged, as even one factor such as the attitude of the person's family may be so pervasive as to minimize the effectiveness of the rehabilitation process.

- (v) Design services that are in harmony with the economic and social resources of the community. To this may be added that services should also be in harmony with the values, expectations and needs of that community. Here it may be useful to reflect that many rehabilitation services have been designed and developed to meet the needs values and resources of so-called western communities. Whilst this most significant reservoir of knowledge and experience should be used to the full when considering new or improved services, the attitudes and values implicit in this fund of experience, should be examined for compatibility with the community where the services are to be established.

This is not to say that any negative attitudes about blindness should be accepted or reinforced, but only that the values on which some services are based may not be the values of some intended recipients of new service.

In developing new services it is also important to recognize that for the success of new services there should be a high commitment to them and priority for them, by those in management positions, those concerned with funding, and by those who will be providing resources. The inclusion of orientation and mobility services can be expected to increase the effectiveness of rehabilitation courses and has often led to an increase in acceptability of the blind by the public.

When considering the establishment of courses for orientation and mobility instructors it may be useful to utilize and seek the cooperation of the existing staff training courses such as teacher training or health staff training courses. It is likely that there will be at least some course commonalities which can be used. The teaching of orientation and mobility to clients may be carried out in many settings as is indicated in the European Mobility Booklet (1976). Some very successful mobility programmes operate from special rehabilitations for the blind. Some from community health centres, some from other settings such as residential establishments for the aged, centres for other handicapped or with itinerant instructors working with the person in his own home (Holdsworth, 1974). Some effective programmes have been carried out in mental health settings (Holdsworth, *ibid.*, Eichorn, 1969).

The Comstac Report (1966) and the associated self study guides Orientation and Mobility Services (1977) and Orientation and Mobility for Residential Schools (1968) are additional useful references for those planning the introduction and development of orientation and mobility services.

## Training the Individual

Turning now to consider the matter of mobility tuition provided to individuals a brief simple answer to the question "What is orientation and mobility training" is given in the booklet *How Does a Blind Person Get Around* (1973). In part this document states—"it is the part of a blind person's rehabilitation or education that prepares him to travel independently. The goal of all programmes is the achievement of as much mobility as is possible according to the capabilities and desires of the individual. The fundamental building block is the development of the student's confidence, first in the mobility specialist and then in his own ability to use his own other senses and to learn to get around on his own".

As individuals have different starting points in mobility needs, different reactions to given situations, different rates of learning, and different degrees of visual loss, mobility tuition is usually given on a one-to-one basis by the Orientation and Mobility Instructor. In this way appropriate feed back—so essential to learning mobility skills—can be given at once to the client by the instructor who is responsible for the client's safety.

Individual programmes of tuition are usually planned on a graduated basis, progressing from simple to more complex mobility experiences. Each client should be assessed in terms of his mobility needs and his abilities, tuition goals being set in conjunction with the client, the programme established and modified to suit individual progress, and on completion evaluated for effectiveness and efficiency of presentation.

Individually defined goals should determine the level of competency to be aimed for and each client should be helped to develop:

- (i) an understanding of his abilities and capabilities,
- (ii) a realistic view of his travel competencies,
- (iii) knowledge of how to adapt his learned skills to new situations,
- (iv) an understanding of how and when to seek help or support.

Hill and Fonder (op. cit.) describe the ultimate goal of orientation and mobility as being to enable the student or client to enter any environment familiar or unfamiliar and to function safely, efficiently, gracefully and independently by using a combination of these two skills. The authors then give an overview of the prerequisite skills and variables in three headings—cognitive, psychomotor and affective.

### *Cognitive*

- (a) Concept development—body imagery, nature of environment and temporal relationships
- (b) Divergent thinking
- (c) Problem solving
- (e) Decision making
- (e) Retention and transfer
- (f) Utilization of remaining senses.



### *Psychomotor*

- (a) Balance and coordination
- (b) Posture and gait
- (c) Ability to walk a straight line and execute turns
- (d) Dexterity
- (e) Stamina
- (f) Reaction time.

### *Affective*

- (a) Attitude
- (b) Motivation
- (c) Values
- (d) Self Confidence.

It is important however to recognize that it is the individual's existing skills, abilities and successes on which the Orientation and Mobility Instructor will have to build in working with that person. Listing the person's abilities and defects may help to identify the total needs, but recognizing the person's strengths, achievements and capabilities is the fundamental basis from which teaching and learning will stem. All too frequently rehabilitation assessments emphasize the problems at the expense of recognition of the individual's successes in managing his life up to that time. Each person working with a client should be constantly sensitive to expressions by the client of his aspirations, interests, motivating factors and concerns. This applies especially to the Orientation and Mobility Instructor who often works with a client for longer periods than other rehabilitation staff members.

### **Adaptations**

The techniques developed in the use of the long cane, and the tuition patterns established for the teaching of orientation and mobility skills, were of course prepared to meet the needs of blind and visually impaired people living in western type urban situations. Experience has shown that these techniques are broadly applicable to other situations such as rural settings. Frequently however adaptations have to be made to meet individual differences such as the effects of ageing, other handicaps and in general any significant, medical, physical, psychological or social factors.

Other adaptations may have to be made to suit differing environments, social customs and community values. To illustrate the ways in which orientation and mobility tuition can be adapted to differing situations, two programmes conducted by Royal Guide Dogs for the Blind Associations of Australia are described—one in India and the second with aboriginal people in the Northern Territory of Australia.

Devedas and Westaway (1978) made a particularly perceptive approach to the development of orientation and mobility programmes in Asia together with an account of a joint programme conducted in



Bombay, by the National Association for the Blind, India and the Royal Guide Dogs for the Blind Associations of Australia and which was funded by an Australian Churches Overseas Aid Organization, Force 10.

This paper emphasizes the necessity for joint decision making between providers, funders and receivers of the programme. The paper also points out the commonalities of orientation and mobility instructor courses and those courses undertaken by paramedical and some educational workers. The paper states in its summary "for developing assisted programmes in Asia there appears to be a need for allocating significant resources into joint planning. The processes involved in planning have to be seen as part of the development to create responsiveness and thereby responsibility to sustain such programmes".

At the workplace some of the methods of mobility service delivery which have been developed in India include:

- (i) Mobility Instructors working as members of the team of rehabilitation workers in a residential centre.
- (ii) Physical education instructors with mobility training who work in schools for blind children.
- (iii) Machine shop instructors with mobility training working in a vocational rehabilitation centre in Bombay.
- (iv) Mobility Instructors working as members of a team in a residential rural rehabilitation centre.
- (v) Multi-purpose workers with mobility training who also teach blind people how to do household duties and rural jobs such as farming.

Ways in which techniques have been adapted include:

- (i) Using local materials such as bamboo for long canes. Bamboo is in plentiful supply, is inexpensive and robust.
- (ii) In busy urban areas the road is often used as an alternative to overcrowded footpaths which are subject to regular excavation.
- (iii) The use of the cane as a link between the guide and person being guided where cultural expectations do not allow a man to hold a woman's arm.
- (iv) Teaching people to walk without any aid particularly in rural areas where there is little traffic and where walking tracks can be followed with the bare foot.
- (v) Giving younger children in the family the responsibility of acting as guides for the father in order that he can continue as the bread winner (Pieters, 1979).

In addition some programmes have been developed to meet specific needs of the rural blind in India (Jaekle, 1977).

Social and cultural differences provided the greatest pressures for adaptation in a programme designed to assess the needs of visually impaired aborigines in Central Australia (Durinck, 1979). The programme was conducted under the auspices of the Australian National

Council of and for the Blind, whilst agencies provided staff and other support. Some aspects of the social and cultural differences included:

- (i) The permeating effect of tribal laws and beliefs. This was shown when one training programme had to be suspended due to the trainee having an injured leg. The injury was in the form of "sorrow cuts". Such cuts are inflicted as a sign of the depth of feeling the person has about a particular incident. Again the training of several clients had to be suspended because the people concerned had left the area to attend "ceremonies". Thus no matter how "europeanized" the Australian aboriginal may appear to be, his whole life is continually governed by tribal beliefs and laws.
- (ii) The impact of the extended family system. The extended family is such that it was found to be impossible in many cases to assess and apply services to a single client. The family had to be involved at all stages. A typical situation would occur where the whole family, including the client, received a demonstration and explanation of the services being offered. The family then had to be allowed several days in order to discuss the matter. There is also the matter of interpersonal obligations particularly concerning the right to possess various objects. If a person had a shirt and another member of the group said that he wanted it then he would be obliged to hand it over. This did cause some problems where prescription lenses or aids such as the long cane were concerned. Thus the individual had to be seen as an indivisible part of the family, and staff had to expect to deal intimately with the whole family as well as the individual person.
- (iii) The fundamental differences between "european" Australians and Aboriginal Australian cultures. For example values concerning nature in western societies are often expressed in terms of mastery. In the Aboriginal society they are expressed in terms of harmony. Then there is a concept of sharing rather than hoarding goods. Values about competition are expressed in terms of cooperation and humility rather than aggression, and individuality is a matter of group identification rather than self realization. Thus any training programme must be structured in relation to how the client perceives the relevance of that programme to his total environment, psychological, social and physical. Durinck concludes that whilst orientation and mobility skills are appropriate in the aboriginal setting examined, major changes need to be made in the planning of programmes and in the application of skills. In particular any programmes developed should not only look at the person's mobility needs but should be presented in relation to the client's cultural upbringing and the sociological setting in which they are to function.

These examples of two programmes demonstrate the importance of understanding the social, cultural and economic climates before programmes are initiated.

The long cane technique as part of orientation and mobility services has a solid history of development and success but it should not perhaps be seen as an unchangeable system ready to be applied to any setting, country or culture. Each society is likely to have untapped resources in terms of skills, personnel and knowledge which can and should be used in establishing orientation and mobility, and perhaps other services. However the importance of good instruction for blind and visually impaired people in orientation and mobility cannot be over emphasized (Buijk, 1977) thus staff training should be a first step in the development of services.

Nevertheless lavish resources are not a necessary prerequisite for effective services given a genuine effort to understand the real needs of the consumer, careful planning, and community cooperation.

## Conclusion

This brief overview of the use of the long cane in developing orientation and mobility skills has not attempted to examine the subject in detail. It is anticipated that those interested in establishing or further developing orientation and mobility services would find additional information and support in the growing body of specialist literature and through the experience and knowledge which has been gained in the field.

This author acknowledges the valuable help which has been so readily given to him over many years by practitioners throughout the world including those who use orientation and mobility skills as part of their daily living activities and also teachers of those skills.

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June, 1979.

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## **PROFESSIONAL SESSION 6**

### **REGIONAL COOPERATION**

Saturday morning, August 4, 1979

Chairman: Sheikh Abdullah M. Al-Ghanim, Saudi Arabia

## **REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON AFRICAN AFFAIRS**

by Ismaïla Konate, Chairman

### **I. Introduction**

The developing countries in Africa are beset with serious health problems and eye diseases often cause great havoc. There is an enormous amount of blindness on the continent.

The situation is even more dramatic because conditions are such that the blind cannot lead a decent life. In most of the States they are economic outcasts living on the sidelines of social and economic development.

It was in this context that the Committee on African Affairs saw the light of day in 1964, thanks to Tunisia and Nigeria. If this Committee remained somewhat dormant from 1964 to 1974, it was because it was faced with considerable problems. In fact, most of the States were ill-informed about the problem and the distances separating the countries did not help to facilitate relations.

Furthermore, following their independence, the African countries were confronted with problems of the utmost importance. In this report we shall therefore comment on the situation between 1974 and 1979, taking into account two distinct periods, that of August 1974 to March 1977 and March 1977 to August 1979.

### **II. August 1974–March 1977**

Since 1974 there appears to have been a fresh impetus and the twelve African countries affiliated to the World Council are making their mark.

In 1974, Mr. Mohamed Rajhi, Secretary General of the National Union of the Blind of Tunisia (UNAT) was elected Chairman of the African Affairs Committee. A feature of this period was an intense information campaign and a real crusade throughout the continent. The first thing, in fact, was to convince governments of the need to support the blind and the Committee's activities.

Circulars and international meetings in one country or another provided favourable opportunities and this resulted in OAU recognizing our Committee and giving us observer status.



At the same time, at the Committee's subsequent General Assembly, the Executive approved the Constitution. Furthermore, in implementation of the decisions of the Euro-African meeting in Tunis in November 1973, Tunisia set up an African Centre for the Training of Educators. This centre has trained a number of African technicians in rehabilitation and education.

In the same context, an agreement was signed between the European Regional Committee and the African Regional Committee. Unfortunately, after the meeting of the Executive Committee of the World Council, in Riyadh, March 1977, Mr. Mohamed Rajhi, then chairman of the African Regional Committee, submitted his resignation.

Nevertheless, the culmination of this period (1974-1977) was the decision of WCWB Executive Committee to hold the Sixth World Assembly in Lagos from August 1 to 10, 1979.

### **III. March 1977-August 1979**

After the resignation of Mr. Rajhi and the unsuccessful attempts to bring him back to the World Council in the name of African unity, I took over the Committee following the decision of WCWB's Honorary Officers. While it was difficult to hold meetings of the Committee from 1974 to 1977, the period 1977 to 1979 saw a decided improvement in contacts, which became frequent (May 1977 in Dakar; December 1977 in Bamako; November 1978 in Algeria and Prague).

This period was marked by:

1. Affiliation of new members
2. Dissemination of information through meetings, visits, correspondence
3. Strengthening of relations with the European Regional Committee
4. Conception and study of the Constitution of the African Solidarity Fund
5. Conception and study of a liaison medium (African Blind journal)
6. Circulation of texts relating to legislation concerning the blind
7. Examination of possibilities of creating one or more teacher training centres
8. Approaches to airlines on transporting the blind
9. Meetings with certain Heads of African States and the Secretary General of the Organization of African Unity
10. Visits by delegates to Africa, including Upper Volta, Togo, Morocco, Tunisia, etc.

### **IV. Suggestions**

Although considerable progress has been made in social welfare for the blind in Africa, it must however be admitted that enormous problems persist.

In fact, the want of information, the great distances and the lack of coordination of experts still slow up the development of the African Committee.

Consequently, it is desirable that the continent be divided into sub-groups made up of States within the same geographical area, each sub-group representing a sub-committee with a governing body.

This sub-committee would draw up a plan of action. The group of sub-committees would elect the Executive of the Committee on African Affairs.

## **V. Conclusion**

As can be seen, problems are far from simple in the African countries.

Their solution depends on the existence in each country of a strong, united association having at the top people who have the courage of their convictions and faith in the cause.

There should then be close collaboration between the countries which, by combining their efforts, could solve many problems. Disputes foreign to Africa, based on motives unknown to our countries, should on no account be transposed to Africa which must be united and needs all its energy to face the all-consuming problem of blindness and the blind.

The African Committee is basing its hopes to a great extent on Lagos, which should be the starting point of blind welfare activities in Africa. May international solidarity play its role to the full!

## **REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON ASIAN AFFAIRS**

by Suresh C. Ahuja, Chairman

The Chairman and Members of the Committee (as constituted in 1974) have been active and have been working closely together.

### **Membership**

Membership of the Asian Committee consists of representatives of the National Members, International Members, Associate Members, Sponsoring Members and the Honorary Life Members from Asia. Representatives from Australia and New Zealand are also serving on the Committee as invitees with a view to building up closer ties between Asia and Oceania. Some organizations of the blind in the Asian Region have nominated observers on the Committee. This has helped to bring about greater cooperation and coordination between organizations of and for the blind.

### **Dissemination of Information**

Since February 1975, a quarterly Newsletter is being issued regularly by the Chairman. Copies are sent to all members, officials of the WCWB and others interested in work for the blind in Asia. In addition to news items from countries in the region, the Newsletter also draws the attention of members to international events, special problems concerning the welfare of the blind, prevention of blindness, etc.

"The Asian Blind" (Vol. 9) was published in 1976. In this issue, a survey of educational facilities for the blind in Asia was included. Vol. 10, which includes a survey of vocational training and employment opportunities for the blind in Asia was distributed at the Fifth Asian Conference. Volume 11 containing a survey on orientation and mobility practices in Asia, it is hoped, will be ready for distribution at Lagos.

### **Leadership Seminar**

The Leadership Seminar for Training of Blind Leaders sponsored by the Committee on Asian Affairs of the WCWB, the Swedish Association for the Blind, was held in Kuala Lumpur from November 19 to December 2, 1975. Nineteen participants from Malaysia, Singapore, Indonesia, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Bangladesh and India took part in the Seminar. The 9 instructors included Mr. Anders Arnör, Secretary General, WCWB; Mr. Henry Blid, Swedish Cooperative Centre; Mr. Suresh C. Ahuja, Chairman, WCWB Asian Committee; Mrs. Fatima Shah, President, International Federation of the Blind; Mr. Ron Chandran-Dudley, Singapore Association for the Blind; Miss Winnie Ng, Malayan Association for the Blind; Mr. W. G. Brohier, St.

Nicholas School for the Blind, Malaysia and Mr. Daman Prakash, International Cooperative Alliance.

The Asian Committee records its thanks to the Swedish Federation of the Blind whose late President, Dr. Charles Hedkvist, conceived the idea of holding this Seminar and obtained the necessary financial aid from the Swedish International Development Authority.

As a follow-up to the Leadership Seminar, the National Federation of the Blind of India held a Leadership Seminar in June 1976 in Kashmir. This was followed by a second session in New Delhi in December 1976.

### **Cooperation and Coordination**

The Chairman had a meeting with Mr. Lal Advani, Chairman of the International Federation of the Blind, Asian Committee, with a view to bringing about cooperation and coordination. The Chairman attended the First Regional Conference of the IFB's Asian Committee in New Delhi in November 1978.

India and Malaysia have offered observation courses for workers in the field of blind welfare.

Bilateral Cooperation between countries in the region and between Asian and Oceanic countries has been increasing steadily.

India has received talking book equipment from Australia and New Zealand. A training course for mobility instructors was held in Bombay in January–February 1977 with the help of a team from Australia. A Department of Rehabilitation has been established in Bombay by the NAB with assistance from Australia.

Close cooperation is being maintained with the WCWB Middle East Committee. At the invitation of its Chairman, Sheikh Abdullah M. Al-Ghanim, Mr. Suresh C. Ahuja attended the Fourth Regional Conference, organized by the Regional Bureau of the Middle East Committee for the Welfare of the Blind, in Amman in November 1977.

### **Prevention of Blindness in Asia**

Thanks to the efforts of Mr. Hideyuki Iwahashi, the Sasakawa Memorial Health Foundation has recently donated an amount of US \$200,000 for prevention of blindness work in Asia. This is the first donation of its kind and if the programmes initiated by WHO prove successful, more aid will be forthcoming not only for prevention of blindness but also for programmes for the welfare of the blind.

Earlier, Japan provided Nepal with ophthalmic equipment. A team of Japanese ophthalmologists visited Nepal in 1976.

The WCWB and the Asian Committee were represented at meetings of the WHO Regional Committees. At all these meetings, the representatives of the Asian Committee focused attention on the need for increased activity in the field of prevention of blindness.

Mr. Suresh C. Ahuja has recently been appointed as a member of the WHO Experts Advisory Panel on Trachoma and Prevention of Blindness.

## **ILO/DANIDA Asian Seminar on Vocational Rehabilitation of the Blind and Deaf, Hong Kong**

The ILO, jointly with DANIDA and the Hong Kong Government, held a Seminar on Vocational Rehabilitation of the Blind and Deaf in Hong Kong from December 1 to 17, 1976. The Committee on Asian Affairs of the WCWB nominated Miss Winnie Ng, Honorary Secretary, to attend this Seminar and present a paper. Miss Winnie Ng made an excellent contribution at the Seminar.

ILO's interest in the Vocational Rehabilitation and Placement of the Blind is indeed most welcome.

## **International Conferences**

The Chairman attended the 5th Pan Pacific Conference in Singapore and the 2nd ICEVH Asian Regional Conference in Penang in November 1975. In Singapore he presented a paper on "Employment Opportunities and Prospects for the Blind" and in Penang a paper on "Career Counselling" and a paper on "The Role of the Asian Committee of the World Council for the Welfare of the Blind."

The Chairman also attended the Helen Keller World Conference on Services to Deaf-Blind Youths and Adults in New York in September 1977, where he was responsible for the adoption of a "Declaration of the Rights of the Deaf-Blind". The Chairman has attended meetings of WCWB Committee on Services to the Deaf-Blind in London, 1976 and Hanover, 1978. He has been appointed as a member of the Programme Committee for the forthcoming Helen Keller Centennial Conference to be held in Hanover in 1980.

## **Regional Sports**

At Riyadh, the WCWB established a Standing Committee on Sports. At the invitation of the Committee of WCWB Sports Committee to nominate a representative, Mr. G. L. Nardekar (India) was nominated to represent the Asian Committee. The WCWB Sports Committee has recommended the formation of Regional and National Sports Councils of the Blind. As a result, an All India Sports Council for the Blind has been established by the National Association for the Blind, India. The Asian Committee has appointed a group to collect information regarding sports activities and standards in sports for the blind in Asia.

## **Takeo Iwahashi Awards**

The Takeo Iwahashi Award, instituted by the Asian Committee in 1975, has been awarded to the following:

Mr. Tsung Wen-Shiong, Taiwan, 1975

Datuk (Dr.) Keshmahinder Singh, Malaysia, 1976

Capt. H. J. M. Desai, India, 1977

Mr. Hideyuki Iwahashi, Japan, 1978

Miss Lucy Ching, Hong Kong, 1979.



## **Asian Fund**

The Asian Fund, which was constituted at the Fourth Asian Conference on Work for the Blind is being built up steadily, though slowly. Efforts are now being made to raise much larger funds in order that the activities of the Committee, particularly with regard to staff training and exchange programmes, can be increased.

## **Finance**

A voluntary operating fee of US \$30 per year has been received from some of the member countries. The Regional Bureau of the Middle East Committee for the Welfare of the Blind very kindly gave a grant of US \$2,000. The Christoffel Blindenmission granted Rs. 6,000 towards the publication and printing of "The Asian Blind".

Expenses of the Committee have been kept to a minimum, thanks to the decision of the National Association for the Blind of India and the Malayan Association for the Blind to meet the administrative costs incurred by the Chairman and Secretary respectively, during their present term of office.

## **Committee Meetings**

Two meetings of the Asian Committee were held in Hong Kong during the Fifth Asian Conference on Work for the Blind. At these meetings the members adopted a new set of rules for the Committee and also considered the future plans of the Committee. The rules have been submitted to the Executive Committee of the WCWB for approval.

In accordance with the new rules, the Committee elected a Chairman and a Vice-Chairman for the period 1979-84. Mr. Suresh C. Ahuja was re-elected Chairman and Miss Winnie Ng was elected Vice-Chairman. These names are being submitted to the Executive Committee of the WCWB for approval.

## **Fifth Asian Conference on Work for the Blind**

Over 140 participants from 22 countries attended the Fifth Asian Conference on Work for the Blind in Hong Kong from December 3 to 9, 1978. Fourteen Asian countries—Pakistan, Nepal, Bangladesh, India, Sri Lanka, Singapore, Thailand, Malaysia, Hong Kong, Taiwan, Indonesia, Philippines, Japan and South Korea were represented. Three Oceanic countries—Australia, New Zealand and Fiji also sent representatives. The World Council for the Welfare of the Blind was represented by Mr. Hideyuki Iwahashi, Vice-President (Japan), Sheikh Abdullah M. Al-Ghanim, Vice-President (Saudi Arabia), Mr. John C. Colligan, Honorary Treasurer (United Kingdom), Mr. Anders Arnör, Honorary Secretary General (Sweden), Mr. Bengt Lindqvist, Chairman, Committee on Rehabilitation, Training and Employment (Sweden), and Mr. H. Roberts, Chairman, Committee on Coordination of Aid to the Developing Countries (USA).

The theme of the Conference was "Towards Total Integration—A Practical Approach" and the main emphasis was on Vocational Training and Employment of the Blind. The Plenary Sessions were

followed by discussion groups which resulted in many new ideas being aired.

An important feature of the Conference was the high proportion of blind people who were present at the Conference both as participants and as speakers. Organizations of the blind from many countries, namely Pakistan, Bangladesh, India, Indonesia, Hong Kong, Singapore, Malaysia, Japan and Australia were represented.

Another interesting feature of the Conference was the number of new speakers. With the exception of three or four papers, most of the papers were presented by people who were speaking at an international conference for the first time.

A highlight of the Conference was the International Session when statements were presented by Chairmen of the Regional and Standing Committees of WCWB and representatives of international agencies. The very presence of a number of leading personalities from the international set-up indicated their positive interest and support in work for the blind in Asia. It also signified recognition of the fact that Asia is taking steps to achieve the goal which all of us in work for the blind are aiming at—the total integration of the blind.

At the end of the Conference ten brief and to-the-point resolutions were adopted. These resolutions, it is believed, are practical and capable of being implemented during the next five years. These resolutions cover the areas of education, low vision, training, employment, orientation and mobility, the rural blind, the multi-handicapped and integration of blind women. In addition, special attention has been focused on programmes for blind children during International Year of the Child. These resolutions are being brought to the attention of the governments, national organizations of and for the blind in the region and international agencies.

Asia has indeed come a long way from the time when the First Asian Conference on Work for the Blind was held in Tokyo in 1955. The first three conferences were organized for the Asians by international agencies. The Fourth Asian Conference on Work for the Blind in Bombay in 1973 and the Fifth Asian Conference on Work for the Blind in Hong Kong in 1978 have been two of the most successful and well organized international conferences and these were organized by the WCWB Committee on Asian Affairs.

## REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON EUROPEAN AFFAIRS

by André Nicolle, Chairman

During the period under review, cooperation between organizations of and for the blind in Europe has made further progress. This is shown by the many regional events organized by individual members, which almost all the members attended.

### The ERC General Assemblies and the Executive Committee

The main events were the General Assemblies in 1976 in Geneva and 1978 in Prague. According to the general view, both Assemblies did justice to their tasks because they drew attention to growing problems and provided opportunities for discussing practical possibilities of reaching a solution.

In Geneva in 1976, resolutions on the following subjects were adopted: press and public relations, mobility, care for multi-handicapped blind people and cooperation with BLINDOC Information Service, set up by ILO.

In Prague in 1978, resolutions were adopted on the tasks of the organizations of and for the blind during the International Year of the Child (1979) and the International Year for Disabled Persons (1981), and on the social rights of the blind. The resolution on the social rights of the blind is based on declarations made by the United Nations on general Human Rights and on the Rights of Disabled Persons. Presuming that equality of opportunity for the blind must be secured, the resolution contains a survey of ways in which society can ease a blind person's situation, such as through financial compensation for blindness, pensions, tax reductions, cheaper fares, etc.

It was also decided to hold the General Assemblies every three years instead of every two.

Since the 1978 General Assembly, the ERC Executive Committee is composed of the following members:

Chairman	André Nicolle	France
Vice-Chairman	Dr. Jan Drtina	Czechoslovakia
Vice-Chairman	Prof. Giuseppe Fuca	Italy
Vice-Chairman	Dr. Jan Huyers	Netherlands
Treasurer	Arne Husveg	Norway
Secretary	Dr. Dr. Helmut Pielasch	GDR

The three former Vice-Chairmen: Ami Mermod, Switzerland and Ivan Iliev, Bulgaria, retired due to old age and illness, while Wilhelm Marhauer, F.R.G. is deceased.

The Executive held two meetings each year. These meetings were held in connection with conferences and committee meetings, which made possible a continual contact between the national organizations of and for the blind. The executive members paid their own travel

expenses so that the meetings could be held without being a drain on ERC resources.

### World and European Conferences

During the period covered by this report, ten international events were held in Europe in which the ERC participated either directly or indirectly. Four of them were world conferences:

- the International Conference on the Situation of Blind Women, November 1975, in Belgrade;
- the Experts Meeting on the Standardization of Mathematical and Scientific Braille Notation, April 1976, in Moscow;
- the International Symposium on Problems concerning the Pre-School Education of Blind Children and Parental Guidance, May 1976, in Berlin;
- the International Symposium on Problems of Sports for the Blind, April 1979, in Belgrade.

Six international events were held on the European level. They were:

- the International Congress for the 150th Anniversary of the Braille System, May 1975, in Paris;
- the International Conference on Culture, Leisure and Sport for the Blind, September 1975, in Warsaw;
- the European Technical Conference, April 1977, in London;
- the First European Games for the Blind, August 1977, in Poznan;
- the European Conference on Basic Rehabilitation, October 1977, in Rotterdam;
- the European Conference of Directors of Braille Printing Houses and Libraries, April 1978, in Madrid.

These conferences provided a forum for the experts for the exchange of experiences and new ideas. They were prepared by qualified lecturers in the commissions and working groups of the ERC Executive. They were made possible by the general hospitality and careful organization of the host organizations for and of the blind.

It was possible to discuss new findings at these conferences. The practical and theoretical lectures influenced the work of the member organizations and helped substantiate activities in each field dealt with.

Our friends did very valuable work to promote international co-operation by holding these events and thus also effectively supported the ERC. An international organization cannot remain alive simply by its members paying their annual dues. It needs real support through the material contribution of holding conferences, seminars and other meetings and through the issuing of international publications. This form of support is given to the ERC by the majority of its members.

The close cooperation of the European countries becomes particularly clear in the four-language journal "Review of the European Blind". This journal is also issued by the ERC Secretariat. It was developed into a real forum for the exchange of opinions and experiences after authors were found in many countries. Thanks to the generous support given by the Comité National pour la Promotion



sociale des Aveugles in France, the RNIB in the United Kingdom, the National Organization of the Spanish Blind and the Association of the Blind and Partially-Sighted in the GDR, the journal will appear in English, French, Spanish and German braille. These organizations, plus the Norwegian Association of the Blind and the All-Russia Association of the Blind, issue the journal on tape and the Spanish organization provides a Spanish inkprint version. In this way, the "Review" has become a real work of international cooperation. At the request of the WCWB Secretary General, it is sent free of charge to all World Council members since 1978.

The editorial board has decided to publish special issues. In preparation for the International Symposium on Problems of Sport for the Blind, an issue was devoted solely to this subject. Another issue dealt only with the prevention of blindness.

### **Relations with the International Federation of the Blind**

As many members already know, the European Area Committee of the International Federation of the Blind was constituted in May 1978. This means that there are now two international committees in Europe. The ERC Executive will work for fruitful cooperation and always emphasize that which we have in common. We also want to avoid duplication of work. A meeting of the two Executive committees was held at the beginning of 1979. Here, information was exchanged and activities coordinated. In future, too, we wish to do everything possible to facilitate cooperation.

### **Relations with the World Council**

Relations with the World Council are very good. At the 1976 General Assembly we took note that the World Council's interest in the work of the ERC had increased considerably. Since then, this impression has been strengthened.

The European Regional Committee is conscious of the responsibility it has for the work of the World Council; we are of the opinion that the basis for effectiveness of the World Council is that the regional committees work well.

The main work of the World Council is done in the Regional Committees as international cooperation is particularly effective between countries located in the same geographical region and with similar social conditions. We are convinced that by developing this cooperation we can contribute effectively to furthering the World Council's cause, that of the blind and visually handicapped throughout the world.

### **The Development of Sport in the ERC**

It is difficult to highlight any one of the many events, because each was significant in its own field. But one can be mentioned with particular satisfaction because it was a real break-through: the First European Games for the Blind, in Poznan, Poland. For a long time, multilateral sports competitions for the blind had been held in various European



regions, but the first all-European games took place only in August 1977, after the Polish hosts had created all the necessary conditions. Competitions in light athletics, swimming and roll-ball were held and a number of excellent performances were achieved. The Games did much to improve public relations and set new standards. We will do everything possible to continue the Games' tradition and we are convinced that in the various countries they will give a strong impetus to sport for the blind.

### **Work of the Commissions**

The ERC Executive now has five commissions: culture, rehabilitation, social policy, technical aids and sport. The first commissions began work in 1972, and their activities have developed well. Each commission has from five to nine members, can form working groups and call in experts, if they consider it necessary. The commissions have proved to be indispensable advisers for the Executive. It is thanks to their help that the international conferences have been able to achieve such a high level. Furthermore, the commissions made it possible to draw almost all European countries into international work and to establish firm contacts between the experts. The organizations of and for the blind ensured the cooperation of their own experts by taking over their travel expenses and themselves hosting commission meetings.

### **Cooperation with the African Regional Committee**

For many years now, friendly relations have existed between blind people in European and African countries. They are an expression of the sense of responsibility felt by the organizations of and for the blind for blind people on the emerging continent. At the 1976 General Assembly, the ERC and ARC representatives signed an agreement stipulating that the African states would receive more effective aid. By 1978, the first results could already be reported. Many contacts were taken up on a multilateral and bilateral level. A number of European states gathered considerable experience through this exchange and giving of support, and the ERC Executive will search for ways to spread this knowledge.

### **ERC Publications**

In 1976, the brochure "Mobility—A Means to Self-Reliance and Integration of the Blind" was published in four languages. Experts from four countries helped to choose the pictures and write the text. The brochure has found general approval and a second edition has come out. Modelled on this brochure, a second was published—"Games and Toys for Blind Children in Pre-School Age"—with the help of experts from, this time, six countries. And, finally, a third brochure should be mentioned, entitled "Our Blind Child", which advises parents on bringing up their visually impaired children. The last two brochures have been published as a contribution to the International Year of the Child. They have been sent to all organizations of and for the blind free of charge by the ERC Secretariat and further orders can be met.

## **REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON LATIN AMERICAN AFFAIRS**

by Hernando Pradilla Cobos, Chairman

### **Introduction**

Mr. President, other officers, Members of the Executive Committee, Delegates and Observers to the World Council for the Welfare of the Blind Sixth General Assembly.

Today, I have the honour of presenting to you this report as the first chairman of the Latin American Affairs Committee of the World Council for the Welfare of the Blind. This regional committee covers all Latin America and the Caribbean, from Mexico to Chile and Argentina, and the island countries on the Atlantic Ocean. The total population of this region is approximately four hundred million inhabitants, and its blind population reaches the figure of 1,200,000 persons, plus a partially seeing group of 2,000,000.

But what are the characteristics of this visually limited population? Still a lot has to be found out about them. It may be said that half of them live in rural areas, and half in urban conditions, and that there is a great tendency in the rural group to move to the cities. But are they prepared for confronting the challenging and heavy burdens of today's development and civilization, and to integrate themselves satisfactorily into society? In spite of the tremendous development and achievements of the programmes and services for blindness in the region during the last 25 years, I have to say "NO". There is still much to do in all fields, and much of our own and foreign services are needed to do it. How are we going to do it? With our own efforts, dedication, resources and inner motivation, and with those of others who come to help us. Sometimes we are too proud to ask for help, but we need it. But we have to build for our own with our own constructing materials and with those we do not have but can obtain from others.

Prevention of blindness programmes in Latin America and the Caribbean have to be increased to diminish the impact of causes of blindness in the region, because we have a high incidence of blindness and have to do something in this respect soon, really soon.

### **History**

The Latin American Affairs Committee was created by a resolution of the Fifth General Assembly of the World Council for the Welfare of the Blind, held in São Paulo, Brazil, in 1974, upon the separation of the United States of America and Canada to form the North America and Oceania Affairs Committee from the former Inter-American Affairs Committee. At the time only Brazil, Colombia, Guatemala, Peru, Trinidad and Tobago, and Venezuela were members of WCWB

in this region. Today, Argentina, Costa Rica, Mexico, El Salvador, and Uruguay have joined the Council and other countries are working towards this purpose.

Since the meeting of the Committee during the Fifth General Assembly, other outstanding events in which the Committee played a most important part or made a valuable contribution should be pointed out: The section on blindness of IRMA II (Mexico, October–November 1974), where the Latin American Organization for the Promotion of the Blind and Visually Impaired (OLAP) began to take form; the meeting of the first Study Group on Rehabilitation Services and Programmes for Training Personnel for Visually Limited persons in Latin America, called by WHO, PAHO and HKI (Washington, February–March 1975), which produced a very important document of recommendations to Latin American and Caribbean countries.

The constitutive Congress of the Latin American Committee for Services to the Blind and Visually Deficient, held in Bucaramanga, Colombia, September 1975, under the sponsorship of HKI and the National Institute for the Blind of Colombia (INCI); the meeting of the interim Executive of the Latin American Committee for Services to the Blind and Visually Deficient, Committee of the Latin American Committee on Work for the Blind, Guatemala June–July 1976, sponsored jointly by HKI and the Guatemalan National Committee for the Blind and Deaf; the first Latin American Congress of WCWB, held in São Paulo, Brazil, October 1977, under the sponsorship of the Foundation for the Book of the Blind in Brazil, WCWB, Christoffel Blindenmission, KHI, ONCE, WCWB Middle East Affairs Committee. During this extraordinary Congress, not only the professionals met to up-date their knowledge on blindness, but also the administrators, who met jointly with the professionals to create the Latin American Organization for the Promotion of the Blind and Visually Impaired. The Latin American Affairs Committee then met to draw up its own Statutes and organize itself as it is now, with the extraordinary help of Mr. Eric T. Bouletr, Past President of WCWB, and special delegate of WCWB President Boriz Zimin and the officers for this event.

The Latin American Affairs Committee, composed of 11 countries, has now its own statutes, approved by the Officers of WCWB, and a board of five: Chairman, Hernando Pradilla Cobos; Vice-Chairman, Elisa Molina de Stahl, second Vice-Chairman, Hugo Garcia Garcilazo; Secretary, Dorina de Gouvêa Nowill and Treasurer, Lorenzo Navarro. Not only the delegates from the member countries form part of this committee, but also the Associate Members, Honorary Members, Life Members and the Panamerican Council of the Blind.

The Latin American Affairs Committee is the Administrative Division of the Latin American Organization for the Promotion of the Blind and Visually Impaired. At the moment its Chairman is the Vice-President of the Board of OLAP, the Vice-Chairman is the General Secretary, the Secretary is the President, and the second Vice-Chairman and Treasurer are voters.

This organization allows for highly efficient operation in the administrative and professional fields.

## **Achievements**

First of all, we can mention the addition of five countries to the membership list of the WCWB in the region, with a total of 15 delegates, and the inclusion of a new associate member from Brazil.

Secondly, the creation of the Latin American Organization for the Promotion of the Blind and Visually Impaired, which is already the most important forum for the study, research, planning and execution of highly qualified and efficient programmes for the benefit of the blind and visually deficient persons in the region.

Thirdly, the motivation of other countries of the area, professionals and organizations, to cooperate and become members of WCWB, which is of great value for improving the conditions of this group of citizens.

## **Expectations**

Now the Latin American Affairs Committee of WCWB has a structure and organization and is ready to continue working much harder than before to solve the problems of the visually limited of the region and to work against blindness, in cooperation with the International Agency for the Prevention of Blindness and the International Council for the Education of the Visually Handicapped, and also with the Panamerican Council of the Blind.

We, in Latin America and the Caribbean, need to give opportunities to all our blind babies, children, youth, adults and old-aged to be integrally educated, rehabilitated and integrated into society as active participants in the development and progress of our countries, hence to integrate themselves to their societies, therefore to live satisfactory lives for themselves, for their families, for their country-men, for their nations. We are ready to work for this purpose now, not only by ourselves, but also with the help of those who love the cause, who love us, and who have the conditions of the mind and of the heart necessary to work in this field.

For reaching these opportunities for all, we need the help of all those who have already solved their most significant problems and can offer us material and human resources for this work, in order that every country has what is needed for educating, rehabilitating, and satisfactorily integrating the visually limited to a meaningful participation in the life of their communities.

I appreciate your attention and kindly ask you to approve this report as a summary of the activities of the Latin American Affairs Committee for the period 1974-1979.



# **REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON MIDDLE EAST AFFAIRS**

by Sheikh Abdullah M. Al-Ghanim, Chairman

## **1. Introduction**

Five years ago The Middle East Committee for the Affairs of the Blind presented its first report to the Fifth General Assembly of the World Council for the Welfare of the Blind held in São Paulo, Brazil, from August 7 to 16, 1974.

This report included the achievements and activities of the Middle East Committee in the period prior to date of the Fifth General Assembly. At that time only three years had just elapsed since the establishment of the Committee.

This period of five years has been too eventful to be included in this report in detail.

We shall therefore review the most important of our achievements.

## **2. The Third Conference of the Middle East Committee for the Blind**

The Middle East Committee for the Blind held its Third Conference in Damascus between July 15 and 19, 1975. Attended by the President and the Hon. Treasurer of the World Council for the Welfare of the Blind, the representative of the Arab Organization of Education, Science and Culture, the Secretary General of the National Federation of the Blind in the Republic of Tunis, and the representative of the International Labour Organization.

At the end of the Third Conference, after the discussion of all topics, the Middle East Committee for the Blind recommended sixteen useful recommendations.

## **3. The Seventeenth Conference of the Social Affairs Arab Experts**

The Social Affairs Arab Experts held their Seventeenth Conference in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia during the period from January 10 to 16, 1977.

We participated in this conference to which we submitted a report giving an outlook of the aspects of labour and employment with respect to the blind and handicapped in the region.

In our report, we requested that opportunities of work for the handicapped be ensured, particularly the already trained blind persons who have to be placed in proper professions which suit their aptitudes. The report also highlighted our request to enact legislations and regulations based on an appropriate social policy for the visually handicapped placement by opening work opportunities for them.

## **4. Meetings of WCWB and IFB Executive Committee**

Under the patronage of His Royal Highness Crown Prince and Deputy Premier Prince Fahd Ibn Abdul-Aziz and upon the invitation of the Middle East Committee for the Affairs of the Blind, the Meetings



of both WCWB and IFB Executive Committees were held in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia from February 28 to March 5, 1977.

These meetings were attended by 70 members: 45 from WCWB with Mr. Boris Zimin as President and 25 members from IFB with Dr. Fatima Shah as President.

These Meetings have had a great importance and significance.

## **5. The Fourth Conference of the Middle East Committee for the Affairs of the Blind**

Upon an invitation from the Hashimite Kingdom of Jordan, the Fourth Conference of the Middle East Committee for the Affairs of the Blind held its meetings in Amman during the period from 21st to 25th Zul-Ga'adah, 1397 A.H corresponding November 2 to 6, 1977. The Conference was attended by 112 persons representing 16 States, Non-Governmental associations as well as 14 experts and lecturers of different nationalities.

After having discussed all questions raised and reports presented to the conference, 19 recommendations and resolutions were taken.

## **6. The IAPB First General Assembly Meeting**

It was held in Oxford, England, during the period from July 6 to 8, 1978. It was attended by 31 committees out of the 49 committees of which the IAPB is composed. It was also attended by four representatives of organizations which were: Council of International Federation of Ophthalmic Societies in Oxford, Christoffel Blindenmission, Helen Keller International and the Royal Commonwealth Society for the Blind.

The Middle East Committee participated in this conference and forwarded a report on the Prevention of Blindness.

## **7. Helen Keller First World Conference**

Helen Keller First World Conference on Services to Deaf-Blind Youth and Adults was held in New York City, USA during the period September 11-16, 1977. Delegates from 30 countries attended the conference, together with representatives of most of the International and Regional Organizations, Societies and Committees concerned with the handicapped at large and the blind in particular.

The Middle East Committee participated in this conference, and submitted its report.

## **8. Survey at 18 eye hospitals and Ophthalmic Clinics in Saudi Arabia**

In the year 1975 we have arranged in collaboration with a team of Mobile Eye Services in Pakistan to conduct a field survey of eye diseases at some eye hospitals and clinics in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. The team arrived, a sample of patients were chosen from 18 eye hospitals, ophthalmic clinics and rural dispensaries from various parts of the Kingdom, to collect statistical data on communicable eye diseases and causes of their prevalence.

## **9. Cooperation with the International Agency for the Prevention of Blindness**

In the light of the eye diseases survey, we have contacted the IAPB, asking for further information about blindness prevention.

On January 31, 1976, Sir John Wilson came to Riyadh, with Professor Barrie Jones, of clinical ophthalmology, Moorfields Eye Hospital, and Director of WHO Collaborating Centre for Reference and Research on Trachoma and other Chlamydic Infections. In our meetings we discussed with the two-member delegation affairs relating to the causes of blindness, and briefed them on the studies already attained and available data we collected for this purpose.

## **10. Inter-Regional Meeting on the Prevention of Blindness**

An Interregional Meeting was convened by the World Health Organization in Baghdad from March 29 to April 1, 1976. It was recommended to establish a Regional Centre for the Prevention of Blindness in the area.

## **11. Sub-Committee A of the Regional Committee of the Twenty-Sixth Session**

Sub-Committee A of the Regional Committee for the Eastern Mediterranean met in Karachi, Pakistan, from October 11 to 13, 1976 where I attended this meeting on behalf of the Regional Bureau of the Middle East Committee for the Affairs of the Blind, and as a representative of the WCWB. A report was submitted clearly outlining the aspired at aims of participation in the meeting, and showing the hopes that both WCWB and Middle East Committee for the Blind depend on the efforts of WHO and its sub-committees.

In conclusion we asserted our suggestion submitted to the Baghdad Inter-Regional meeting for establishing a "Regional Centre for the Prevention of Blindness".

## **12. The Twenty-Seventh Session of the Regional Committee**

The session of sub-committee A of the Regional Committee, held from October 10 to 13, 1977 in Kuwait, was attended by 85 representatives from twenty Member States of the Region, together with representatives from 23 other intergovernmental, non-governmental and national organizations. I attended this session on behalf of the Middle East Committee for the Blind, and as a representative of both WCWB and IAPB. In my report introduced to the meeting, there was an article about WCWB and IAPB.

Particular stress on urgent matters relating to eye safety was also included in the report.

## **13. The Twenty-Eighth Session of the Regional Committee**

Sub-Committee A of the Twenty-Eighth Session of the Regional Committee for the Eastern Mediterranean met in Manama, Bahrain, from October 9 to 12, 1978.

A detailed report was introduced including all activity aspects we have carried out in the field of Prevention of Blindness at the International and National levels.

#### **14. Meeting of the Technical Committee on Prevention of Blindness**

At the invitation of WHO Eastern Mediterranean Office, Alexandria, the Technical Committee on Prevention of Blindness, convened in Alexandria from June 12 to 14, 1978. The meeting was attended by Professors and Experts in Ophthalmology from Pakistan, Sudan, Iraq, Kuwait, Iran, Egypt and Saudi Arabia, as well as Dr. A. H. Taba, Director of Eastern Mediterranean Regional Office, Alexandria; Dr. M. L. Tarizzo, Programme Manager, Prevention of Blindness, WHO Headquarters, Geneva; and myself. The Technical Committee presents recommendations on prevention of blindness.

Thus we managed to make the right approach to the execution of the project through continuous efforts exerted during the last three years.

Many recommendations of significance and effectiveness were issued on the causes leading to blindness.

The objective of the Middle East Committee for the Blind and its Regional Bureau has always been to uplift the level of services rendered to the blind in the area of cultural, educational, tuitional and social aspects.

### **THE EDUCATIONAL ASPECT**

#### **1. A Second Training Course at Al-Noor Institute in Bahrain**

A second training course for teachers of Al-Noor Institute for the Blind in Bahrain (August 1-15, 1975). This course was held in co-operation with International Council for the Education of the Visually Handicapped (ICEVH). This four-week course, was attended by 35 teachers (males and females), all working at Al-Noor Institute for the Blind in Bahrain.

#### **2. Seminar on the Education of the Teachers in the Special Institutes for the visually handicapped in Saudi Arabia**

In cooperation with the Ministry of Education in Saudi Arabia and the International Council for the Education of the Visually Handicapped, we held a seminar in Riyadh for the teachers in the Special Institutes for the Visually Handicapped in Saudi Arabia as it includes the greatest number of Institutes for the Blind in the Middle East Region. In order to enable the largest possible number of the blind to benefit from this seminar, we decided to hold it during summer vacation. The number of participants in this course which lasted four weeks was 55 (40 male and 15 female teacher trainees).

#### **3. Paediatric Seminar**

It was held in three provinces in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia during the period from March 15 to 21, 1978. In Jeddah, King Abdul-

Aziz University Hall (from March 15 to 16). In Riyadh, Riyadh University Hall (from March 18 to 19). In Dammam, King Faisal University Hall (from March 20 to 21). It was attended by paediatricians, doctors, as well as professors and students of medicine in each university. A team of world experts and doctors of wide repute participated in the course.

#### **4. Optacon Training Course**

It was held at Al-Noor Institute in the State of Bahrain (from January 7 to 31, 1978) in collaboration with the producing company of Optacon equipment, i.e. Telesensory Systems Inc., of USA. The trainees consisted of a number of boys and girls from the academic division in the institute.

The programme plan was applied under the supervision of two ladies, namely Mrs. Dale H. Denson and Mrs. Rihab Addajani.

### **IN THE FIELD OF TRAINING AND REHABILITATION THE REGIONAL CENTRE FOR REHABILITATION AND TRAINING OF THE BLIND GIRLS IN JORDAN**

It was established in Amman, Jordan and opened in the academic year 1974–1975 A.D. The centre presently incorporates 60 girl trainees. In 1977 a group of 16 trainees was first graduate from the centre, followed by another group of eight girls, who graduated in 1978. Production of well-manufactured woollen clothes increased from 212 pieces to 800 pieces yearly of different patterns. There are now 30 knitting machines in the centre.

#### **2. Vocational Division at Al-Noor Institute in Bahrain**

This division was opened and annexed to Al-Noor Institute in Bahrain in the academic year 1975–1976 A.D. for training the adult blind whose ages range between 18 and 35 years. The number of trainees admitted to the vocational division has so far amounted to 50 students. The division is composed of three vocational workshops. The production yield of this division is steadily progressing, having been marketed since 1976. It includes 35 kinds of brooms, brushes and drawing materials, besides 27 kinds of furniture and wicker work.

#### **3. The sheltered Workshop for the Blind**

The Middle East Committee for the Blind adopted the recommendation No. 4 of the Third Conference held in Damascus in 1975 stipulating that a sheltered workshop for the blind be established in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. Contacts have been made with the officials concerned in the Saudi Government to obtain their approval as to the establishment of the workshop and the land area on which it will be set up. The Royal consent to the project was finally issued. The government will bear the cost of the project which is estimated at US \$12,220,000. The workshop is to be annexed to the vocational



rehabilitation centres, already existing in some of the main cities in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, under the supervision of the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, for the interest of the handicapped at large and the blind in particular.

## IN THE CULTURAL FIELD

### 1. Braille Press

It was established on an assigned pavilion annexed to the building of the Regional Bureau in Riyadh. It started production in August 1974, to ensure the embossed transcriptions and publications. Thus our Braille Press has been set up to provide most of the institutes of the blind in member states with scientific and cultural books, school text books, and other needed publications.

Al-Fajr monthly magazine is regularly issued by our Braille Press as an intellectual literary magazine transcribed in embossed characters. So far 54 issues of this magazine have appeared of which hundreds of copies have been circulated. It is usually issued in 450-500 copies to 450 subscribers; 200 locals and 250 outside.

### 2. The Talking Book Library

It was established in September 1975. This proved to be one of the best means for further culture for the visually handicapped, through the most up-to-date media of information. The books which have been recorded on tapes up to now are 220 on various cultural and scientific subjects. These books have been recorded on 188 cassettes. We can fairly say that it has played a significant role, in addition to Braille transcribed books, in serving 311 subscribers, so far. The Talking Book Library has furthermore 8,000 cassettes and 600 receivers to cover the requirements of 600 beneficiaries.

### The Committee's Activities in the Field of Aids

The activities of the Middle East Committee and its Regional Bureau have covered all domains of services which are usually rendered for the visually handicapped. Even financial aids were given due attention by the Middle East Committee, being extended in the form of assistance or contributions or subscription.

The aids amounts extended by the Middle East Committee to various organizations in some countries all over the world, during the period (1974-1978) have totalled US \$12,955,617—out of which US \$438,293 was granted directly from the budget of the Regional Bureau while a sum of US \$12,288,753 was granted by the rightful Government of Saudi Arabia and the remaining US \$228,571 was granted by the rightful Government of Qatar.

The fact remains that all these aids have been approved and granted upon the recommendations and good offices of the Regional Bureau.

On the other hand, the total contributions of the five financing member states to the Regional Bureau amounted during this given period to US \$12,351,537, mainly spent on the projects adopted by the



Middle East Committee since its establishment in 1973 up to 1978. It is well known that the five member states which cover the budget of the Regional Bureau of the Middle East Committee for the Blind are: The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, Qatar, Kuwait and Bahrain.

## REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON NORTH AMERICAN AND OCEANIAN AFFAIRS

by Ross C. Purse, Chairman

Since its creation in 1974, the North America Oceania Region, WCWB has successfully undertaken the necessary steps to become an integral part of the world organization. Its membership, consisting of representatives from Australia, New Zealand, United States and Canada have enthusiastically embraced the concepts and objectives of the world body and are laying the necessary foundation to establish a strong and effective arm within the global framework.

The similarities in cultural, economic, language and philosophies in work for the blind noticeably complemented our regional development and indeed these factors have provided a concrete base from which to build an effective and positive programme.

During the past five years, it has been my privilege and pleasure to visit and dialogue with our member countries and, without question, I have received a high degree of cooperation and enthusiasm throughout the region.

Detailed reports of national activities may be obtained from WCWB Secretariat in Paris. I will, however, take this opportunity of highlighting a few of the major developments of their combined undertakings.

The North America Oceania Region constitution has been approved by our Regional Committee and is now in the hands of the Honorary Officers for ratification. We regard it as a sound document, worthy of their support and workable within our region. In conformity with the requirements of that Constitution the region has appointed a Vice-Chairman in the person of John W. Wilson, Australian National Council of and for the Blind. The region has developed a newsletter under the direction of Loyal E. Apple, Executive Director of the American Foundation for the Blind as an ongoing link between member countries. This bi-annual publication highlights new developments as they occur throughout the region. In my view, this sharing of information will play an important role in keeping the regional members informed on all important developments.

During the 1976 Habitat Conference held in Vancouver, British Columbia, I arranged a CNIB representation to highlight programmes under the auspices of the World Council for the Welfare of the Blind. This included affixing the WCWB stamp on pertinent pamphlets distributed at the exhibit area.

Our region has established a sub-committee under the chairmanship of Mr. Arthur Copeland, United States Association for Blind Athletes, to cooperate with and help implement the growing activities of the WCWB Committee on Sports Activities. The initial contact between the regional committee and its international counterpart is producing

positive and meaningful results in stimulating and coordinating swimming and aquatic sports among the blind.

The North America Oceania Region is mindful and appreciative of the activities planned for the International Year of the Child and member countries have developed programmes to promote activities in support of a better understanding of the special problems of blind children throughout the world.

It has been a distinct privilege to serve as the first chairman of this new region. It has been a rewarding experience. I would be remiss if I did not express my personal appreciation to the President of the World Council, Colonel Boris Zimin, the Honorary Secretary General, Mr. Anders Arnör and the Honorary Officers for their help and advice in all matters pertaining to the welfare of the blind.

Finally, may I take this opportunity to personally recognize the officers and members of the North America Oceania Region who have assisted me in the shaping and development of our regional work within the WCWB terms of reference.

**PROFESSIONAL SESSION 7**  
**INTERDISCIPLINARY COOPERATION IN**  
**PREVENTING BLINDNESS**

Monday morning, August 6, 1979

Chairman: Sir John Wilson, C.B.E., United Kingdom

**REPORT ON THE PREVENTION OF BLINDNESS AND ON  
WCWB PARTICIPATION IN THE WORK OF THE INTER-  
NATIONAL AGENCY FOR THE PREVENTION OF BLINDNESS**

by Sir John Wilson, C.B.E., President, IAPB

The International Agency for the Prevention of Blindness was formed on January 1, 1975 on the initiative of the world organizations concerned with blindness and with ophthalmology. Participation of WCWB in the new Agency had been approved at the São Paulo General Assembly and, on the nomination of WCWB, the following are now members of the Agency's Executive Board:

Colonel Boris Zimin  
(Alternate: Mr. J. C. Colligan)  
Sir John Wilson  
(Alternate: Mr. E. T. Boulter)  
Sheikh Abdullah M. Al-Ghanim  
(Alternate: Dr. J. Cookey-Gam)  
Dr. Susan Pettiss  
(Alternate: Mr. H. G. Roberts)  
Dr. Fatima Shah  
(Alternate: Mr. R. Alagiyawanna).

The Executive Board meets annually and the Agency's First General Assembly—attended by representatives of national committees from 44 countries—met in Oxford, England, July 6–8, 1978. At that General Assembly, the Royal Commonwealth Society for the Blind was requested to continue, for another four years, to provide, with financial support from the British Government, an administrative base for the Agency. The Agency has nine regional committees.

During these last four years, there have been notable developments in the scope and priority of international action for the prevention of blindness. The developments, which have frequently been reported in the WCWB news bulletins and in blind welfare literature, are summarized in the IAPB news-sheet for December 1978, English copies of

which will be available at the Antwerp Assembly. Here, for reasons of space, it is impossible to do more than summarize the main developments.

**1. National Committees.** Representative national organizations, acting as the focus of national interest in blindness prevention and appointing the national delegation to IAPB, now exist in 54 countries. Most of these committees, like IAPB itself, result from partnership between organizations of and for the blind, ophthalmic organizations and government. Already in a number of countries, national multi-disciplinary organizations have developed, promoting impressive national and international programmes. The Agency is grateful to WCWB and its component organizations for the support they have given.

**2. WHO.** The World Health Organization, with which the Agency has official relationship, is the central force in United Nations action for health. Successive resolutions of the World Health Assembly have expanded World Health action for the prevention of blindness, which has now been recognized as one of the priorities of WHO's global technical cooperation programme. This enhanced priority has resulted in the establishment, at the Geneva Headquarters, of an internationally representative Programme Advisory Group, sub-groups and task forces. Specific budget funds have been appropriated and special staff have been appointed both at WHO Headquarters and in some regional offices. With the theme "Foresight Prevents Blindness", World Health Day 1976 drew international attention to the mounting menace of blindness throughout the developing world and to the existence of a technology for controlling that problem at a level of cost effectiveness which makes this one of the most advantageous options in world health policy. During that World Health Year, national campaigns for the prevention of blindness were reported from over 80 member states.

**3. Regional Action.** Regional meetings of WHO and other UN agencies—in which spokesmen of the Agency and WCWB have frequently participated—have greatly extended interest in blindness prevention. There have been regional and intergovernmental meetings—on global strategy in Baghdad 1976; on action to prevent blindness and particularly curable blindness in Asia, held in New Delhi in 1977 and 1978; on action against communicable eye disease in the Middle East, held in Riyadh, Kuwait, and Alexandria 1977 and 1978; on Pan American cooperation 1978. The intergovernmental programme in West Africa for the control of onchocerciasis is now in its fourth year of full operation and could well form the prototype of other regional programmes now being developed against different blinding diseases.

**4. National Action.** Many countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America have now adopted national plans for the prevention of blindness. The Indian national plan, with its massive objective of eliminating needless blindness over 20 years, has attracted international interest. Other



examples of national planning in Asia are Bangladesh, Burma, Indonesia, Pakistan and Thailand. In Africa, national plans are in progress in Kenya, Malawi, Nigeria, Mali, Sudan, Senegal and Tanzania. In Latin America, national plans are in progress in Brazil, Guatemala, Mexico, Peru and Argentina, and in the Caribbean an Inter-Island Eye Service has begun. Parallel with these developments is the mobilisation of governmental and other resources in support of national plans: notably President Carter's Statement in May 1978 identifying the prevention of blindness as a priority of US global health strategy; the intention of the Arab Gulf States to finance a regional programme against trachoma and the communicable eye diseases; the Australian Government's interest in blindness prevention in the Pacific and South-East Asia; Scandinavian aid for programmes in Africa and Asia; Japanese aid in South-East Asia; large international programmes sponsored from the German Federal Republic and the United Kingdom. WHO has established a special account for the prevention of blindness within the voluntary fund for health promotion.

**5. Priorities.** WHO and the Agency have identified four major priorities in the developing world—onchocerciasis, trachoma, xerophthalmia and cataract. In an extended list of priorities, the Agency has added glaucoma, eye injuries and rubella which are substantial problems in some regions. In the advanced countries, emphasis is laid on research against diabetes, macular degeneration, glaucoma, retinitis pigmentosa and hereditary blinding conditions. To be effective, strategy must concentrate against conditions which cause mass blindness (trachoma, xerophthalmia, onchocerciasis), where well-established technology can be applied at low cost (cataract) or where there is the likelihood of an imminent research breakthrough.

**6. Personnel.** Throughout most of the developing countries the main limitation is lack of trained personnel: ophthalmologists, nutritionists, epidemiologists, public health workers, and supporting teams of auxiliary workers. Major attention is therefore now being given, in national and regional plans, to personnel training and to a clearer definition of the role of various levels of staff. Perhaps the greatest advance of the past few years is the recognition that the prevention of blindness is not just a department of ophthalmology, but requires multidisciplinary cooperation within the context of mass delivery, and the development of a new discipline of eye care grafted on to basic health services throughout the developing world. This emphasis on staff training will be one of the main features of the next few years.

**7. Objective.** The Agency, at its Oxford Assembly, and WHO, in recent strategy documents, have stated a common objective. It is, within a limited time scale, to eliminate the "overburden of avoidable blindness". This implies concentration on those countries and communities where blindness now exists on a scale far exceeding international averages. Action is conceived in terms of an initial "attack" phase of about five years followed perhaps by a decade of consolidation by the end of

which preventable blindness should have been reduced to a point where it could henceforward be controlled by ordinary medical services. Throughout the developing world, the objective is to break the link between blindness and population growth and, in the advanced countries, to break the link between blindness and ageing. Such objectives are the aim of strategies now being implemented against onchocerciasis in West Africa; trachoma in parts of the Middle East, the Soviet Union and Australia; cataract in the Indian sub-continent; xerophthalmia in Asia. In the international strategy generally we are thinking in terms of a timescale of 20 years.

**8. Statistics.** A Task Force on the Prevalence of Blindness met in Geneva in November 1978. On the basis of admittedly inadequate information, it concluded that there are likely in the world today to be from 28 million to 42 million blind people according to whether the definition of blindness is placed at 3/60ths (20/400)—which is the WHO criterion for international comparison—or 6/60ths (20/200)—which is the standard generally used in the Americas. If effective action is taken against the priority causes mentioned above, it is reasonable to expect that these figures could be halved over the next twenty years. If effective action is not taken, the number will at least double by the end of this century. The two most striking estimates are that throughout much of Asia more than half the blindness is curable and that the number of children now losing their sight annually from blinding malnutrition is in the order of 250,000.

**9. Conclusion.** The Agency would like to thank WCWB, its national and international members, for the leadership and support they have given since the São Paulo Assembly to the establishment of the Agency and its national committees and for the encouragement they have given to international action for the prevention of blindness.

## THE POTENTIAL IMPACT OF RESEARCH ON REDUCING WORLD BLINDNESS

by Dr. Carl Kupfer

Director, National Eye Institute, Bethesda, Maryland, USA

It is indicative of the World Council's foresight and commitment to the welfare of the blind that a session on the prevention of blindness has been included on the agenda for this Assembly. Surely, the attack on global blindness must proceed on many fronts.

First, we must provide adequately for the economic, social, and cultural needs of those already blind. Second, we must make a concerted effort to prevent blindness when and where the knowledge and technology exists for doing so. And third, we must strive to expand our knowledge of the causes of blindness so that in the future, we will be able to prevent even more people from becoming blind and restore sight to those with blinding disorders we now consider incurable.

The key to the future is research. Research has made cataract surgery one of the most successful operations performed. Research has transformed the primary treatment of glaucoma from surgical to medical. It has been through research that the cause of retrolental fibroplasia was identified and, very recently, that the efficacy of photocoagulation in preventing blindness from diabetic retinopathy was definitively established. Today, research is making significant contributions to our understanding of such diseases as retinitis pigmentosa and macular degeneration. For the first time there is real hope for the ultimate conquest of these disorders.

At last year's Oxford Assembly of the International Agency for the Prevention of Blindness, which Sir John has referred to in his chairman's report, I presented some data indicating a significant increase in world blindness over the next 50 years. This morning, I would like to summarize these data, but at the same time indicate why recent developments in vision research offer hope that these projections will not be borne out.

By the year 2030—50 years from now—the total population of the United States is expected to increase by somewhat less than 50 per cent. But the number of people in the United States over age 55 will increase by 123 per cent, and those over age 85 will increase by about 300 per cent.

The four leading causes of blindness in the United States are cataract, senile macular degeneration, diabetic retinopathy, and glaucoma—all ageing-related disorders. Therefore, with an expansion in the older age groups, blindness from these causes could be expected to increase by an average of more than 160 per cent by the year 2030.

Clearly, such an increase in blindness in the United States—and by inference in Canada and Europe—would seriously affect organizations

that aid the blind and, of course, have tragic consequences for the affected individuals and their families.

In developing nations, populations are expected to triple between the years 1970 and 2025. This fact alone suggests a major increase in blindness in developing nations from causes which are not ageing-related, causes such as ocular infections, blinding malnutrition, blinding filaria, and ocular accidents. But since the number of people in these developing countries aged 55 and over will increase *five-fold* in the next 50 years, here too we are likely to see a significant upsurge in the prevalence of cataract and glaucoma. In addition, we may witness a major increase in the prevalence of chronic retinal disorders, which are presently the leading causes of blindness among many developed nations. Thus, we face the prospect of an increase in blindness which is now preventable—as well as an increase in blinding eye disorders for which means of prevention are currently lacking and for which methods of treatment are inadequate, difficult, expensive, or simply unavailable.

These projections, of course, are based on the hypotheses: (1) that no significant action will be taken over the next five decades to control the causes of blindness which we are now capable of preventing or alleviating, and (2) that no further scientific advances will be made. In both respects, however, we have much cause for optimism. First of all, we are fortunate in having such organizations as the World Council for the Welfare of the Blind, the International Agency for the Prevention of Blindness, and the World Health Organization, all of which have already made outstanding progress in alerting the nations of the world to the extent of the global blindness problem and in fostering effective programs to combat it.

We are also fortunate in having a growing cadre of talented scientists throughout the world who have dedicated themselves to improving our ability to prevent, diagnose, and treat blinding eye disorders. As one indication of the remarkable growth in this field, the number of research grants provided by the National Eye Institute to vision scientists in the United States and abroad has increased from 350 to about 1,100 over the past decade.

A large part of this research effort is aimed at the *prevention* of blindness, but increasingly, attention is also being given to studies which promise improved *rehabilitation* of those who are already blind. Of course, cataract surgery is one of the most dramatic and frequently used means of visual rehabilitation. Thanks to research, we are now able to help cataract patients for whom surgery would have been considered too hazardous just a few years ago.

Research has also resulted in a dramatic improvement in the success rate of corneal transplantation in high risk cases—from about 10 per cent in 1969 to 60 per cent today. Currently, progress is being made in overcoming the immunological problems which still limit the usefulness of corneal transplantation in restoring sight lost from certain kinds of inflammatory diseases and injuries.

Vitrectomy is a surgical procedure which has been developed over the last few years to remove the vitreous of the eye when it becomes clouded by severe haemorrhage or scar tissue. It has proved valuable in res-



toring at least partial vision to thousands who have been blinded by diabetic retinopathy. Research is now underway to see if this procedure can be made even more effective in reducing blindness from diabetic retinopathy and to determine if vitrectomy can be safely extended to preventing blindness from ocular trauma. Vitrectomy may also be useful in the treatment of severe ocular infections such as endophthalmitis by making it feasible to remove infected tissue from the eye. If further research bears out the value of these new uses for vitrectomy, it would be of great benefit to the thousands of people throughout the world who each year are blinded by eye injuries and infections.

Research is also being directed at helping the many people who, although they are presently classified as blind, actually have some capacity to see and, therefore, function better. For example, there are studies to evaluate whether people with retinal disease could be taught to utilize what normal retina remains to improve their vision. Such research also includes basic studies aimed at improving our understanding of the normal visual process, so that we can learn how better to restore vision that has been lost from retinal and sensorimotor disorders.

In this regard, a number of new tests have been developed over the past few years for the study of normal visual function in the laboratory. These tests are far more sensitive and revealing than such traditional measurements of visual function as visual acuity and visual field. We are just now beginning to determine whether these new tests can help improve our ability to diagnose retinal and sensorimotor diseases. With their potential for pinpointing the exact origin of a visual malfunction, these tests may lead to improved treatment of such disorders and to means of helping patients make the most of their remaining vision.

Other research is aimed at development of improved electronic sight substitution systems for reading and mobility. In the development of the Optacon and the various reading machines now on the market, we are witnessing only the beginning of what technology may offer in the future to aid the blind.

Another very encouraging development in the last few years has been the emergence of international cooperation in vision research. Formal agreements now exist between the United States and Japan, and between the United States and the Soviet Union, for cooperation and scientific exchange in vision research. Interest in launching eye research programs has also been expressed by representatives of the European Economic Community, the People's Republic of China, and other nations. In addition to accelerating the pace of vision research, these cooperative arrangements should help ensure the rapid communication and dissemination of new knowledge in this field for the benefit of all the world's people.

I have spoken this morning of the great promise that research holds for the future prevention of blindness and rehabilitation of blind people throughout the world. I am fully confident that this promise will be fulfilled and that the next 50 years will see progress in this field of a kind we can hardly imagine today.

I thank you.



## PREVENTING BLINDNESS IN AFRICA

by Dr. A. M. Awan

Senior Ophthalmic Consultant, Kenyatta National Hospital, Nairobi

I have been asked to speak on preventing blindness in Africa.

The subject cannot be dealt with in ten minutes but I shall do my best to confine my talk to the specified time.

Africa is a vast continent and so is blindness. The most recent estimate is that there are some five million blind people in tropical Africa and undoubtedly the number is increasing with the population increase. An example may be cited of Kenya. About fifteen years ago, with nine million people, the country had about 70,000 blind persons. With a population of fifteen million in 1978, it is estimated that there are over 150,000 blind people.

The problem of blindness in Africa is enormous but in terms of medical control, with the exception of onchocerciasis, which presents a very specific problem in West Africa, most of the blindness is caused by cataracts which are curable and infections which are treatable. For this reason, I believe the objective set by the World Health Organization to eradicate blindness by the end of this century is a reality. It may appear to some that it is a task which is impossible but our experience in Kenya teaches us that it is possible. The real problem is organization.

Kenya is unique among African nations in rural blindness prevention and therapeutic eye care. The work is largely the result of the voluntary organizations working through the Kenya Government's Ministry of Health. The organizations which cooperated in the years since 1956 and which interdigitate with the Kenya Government's Ministry of Health, include the Kenya Society for the Blind, which is the branch of the Royal Commonwealth Society for the Blind, the African Medical and Research Foundation's Flying Doctor Service, the Sight by Wings, the Professor Wave Foundation, the Christoffel Blindenmission and the International Eye Foundation.

All eye activities are controlled by the Ministry of Health through the National Prevention of Blindness Committee, which comprises members from all voluntary agencies and the Committee is chaired by the Deputy Director of Medical Services for effective control and implementation of ophthalmic policy laid down for the Kenya Ophthalmic Programme.

The success of the Kenya Ophthalmic Programme which primarily aims at prevention of blindness is through well organized Mobile Eye Units and well trained paramedical staff who run these units to about 27 centres in the country. We can be proud that we have such a body of able and dedicated men, who are, and will continue to be, the spearhead of all our endeavours to restore sight and prevent blindness.

Kenya is primarily a rural community, The majority of the tribes are sedentary and engage in agriculture and animal husbandry. In these areas there are extensive networks of townships, villages and roads, schools, hospitals and medical dispensaries. These provide foci of population concentration appropriate to remedial health programmes. Very large geographic areas of the country are thinly populated by pastoral and nomadic tribes and these hardy and attractive peoples are not only difficult to reach but generally stay aloof to the influences of western civilization.

So our programme is designed according to the needs of the country, coincident with the expansion of the economic base and the extension of social consciousness.

The mobile eye units see and treat about 600,000 people annually, at a cost of under 50 cents per patient. The Kenya Ophthalmic Programme has been running for the last 20 years. It started its mobility on a second-hand motor cycle and today I am proud to say it has taken up wings and our clinical officers are flown by the Flying Doctors Services of Kenya to each nook and corner of Kenya.

It has been observed that there has been a definite decrease in the number of cases needing eye care in those areas where we have made repeated visits. The incidence has gone down tremendously.

Kenya is not the only country in Africa which is tackling this problem of preventing blindness. Apart from onchocerciasis, action is also being taken in Tanzania, Zambia, Malawi, Lesotho, Botswana, Sudan, the Congo, Ethiopia, Ghana, Algeria, Sierra Leone, Senegal, Mali, South Africa and Zimbabwe.

The International Agency for the Prevention of Blindness is linked with all these countries and it believes the next important step would be a regional plan instituted in Africa. The plan, like that in other world health regions, would basically have three components:

1. It would provide training of personnel besides ophthalmic surgeons but to all levels of paramedical and auxiliaries—it being done in Kenya by us.
2. It would be geared to the whole system of primary health care throughout Africa—it being done in Kenya by us.
3. Input of funds and technological resources—fund difficulty in Kenya.

Given such a plan, there is no doubt in my mind that within 20 years the link between blindness and population could be broken.

I am proud of the Kenya Ophthalmic Programme. Time does not permit me to elaborate. The effectiveness of the entire exercise in preventing blindness in Kenya is due to a central control by the Kenya Government's Ministry of Health and my conclusion is, dealing with blindness in Africa is to treat in a simple way and tackle common eye problems which lead to majority blindness, i.e. the cataracts and infections—this will treat at least 80 per cent of blindness on the continent of Africa—and this could effectively be rendered by the mobile units of the clinical officers under the supervision of ophthalmic surgeons with one central governmental control.

**ATTACKING BLINDING MALNUTRITION:**  
**Report of the Nutritional Blindness Prevention Project**  
**in Indonesia**

Presented by Susan T. Pettiss, Ph.D.

Director of Blindness Prevention, Helen Keller International

Produced by Ignatius Tarwotjo

Director of Academy of Nutrition, Jakarta, Indonesia

and

Alfred Sommer, M.D.

Helen Keller Project Scientist

**Introduction**

It is estimated that each year as many as 25,000 children in Asia alone are victims of nutritional blindness—the disease with the tongue-twisting name “xerophthalmia”, the first sign of which is night-blindness.

Xerophthalmia is caused by a lack of vitamin A needed for the healthy development of the eye. It is often associated with malnutrition. Those most vulnerable to the disease are preschool children (under six years) in tropical countries where the diet is chiefly rice, white maize, cassava, or other starchy foods—children who do not get enough food, and who do not eat the right kind of food. Periods of weaning and illness are especially critical, since the vitamin A level in the body can be depleted either by insufficient vitamin intake or by fighting infection.

Although the geographical region of highest prevalence *seems* to be Asia, documentation suggests existence of pockets of the disease in other regions, sometimes on a seasonal basis or in times of drought or disaster. Past studies have also indicated that xerophthalmia may be a significant public health problem in such West African countries as Ghana, Mali, Senegal, and Upper Volta.

**Problem in Indonesia**

Nutritional blindness has long been recognized as a serious problem in Indonesia. In 1972 the Government initiated a limited program for distribution of high dose vitamin A capsules as an emergency measure in geographic areas where the problem was considered most severe. In the same year collaborative arrangements were made with Helen Keller International (then called the American Foundation for Overseas Blind) to evaluate the impact, cost and efficiency of this pilot program. The results indicated that while regular administration of capsules

reduced the occurrence of mild forms of xerophthalmia, there was a need for further intensive study in order to identify causal factors and more sharply define the population at greatest risk.

### **Nutritional Blindness Prevention Research**

Subsequently, in June of 1975, the Indonesian Ministry of Health undertook to explore, along with representatives of Helen Keller International, the possibility of carrying out a large research project aimed at answering major, practical questions that remained obstacles to the development of a national nutritional blindness prevention program.

These included, among others:

(1) What are the underlying causes of xerophthalmia and nutritional blindness, and the relative contributions of vitamin A deficiency, protein deficiency, and systemic diseases in their etiology?

(2) What is the magnitude and geographic distribution of the problem throughout the major population areas in Indonesia and which of those areas have child populations at greatest risk of disease?

(3) What is the simplest, safest, most practical and effective form of vitamin A treatment?

(4) Is it possible to identify one or more food items eaten by a significant proportion of children with xerophthalmia which might be practically fortified with vitamin A?

(5) What are the reasons xerophthalmic children do not, at present, eat sufficient quantities of vitamin or pro-vitamin A rich foods?

Commencing in September 1976 and continuing until June 1979, a large-scale investigation into the origins of vitamin A deficiency and nutritional blindness, and what might be done to prevent them has been carried out. The project was under the auspices of the Indonesian Ministry of Health with technical assistance from Helen Keller International, and significant financial assistance provided by the United States Agency for International Development. Although continuing data analysis will provide a clearer picture of the disease and its prevention, program development has already begun on the basis of research findings already available and summarized in this report. A detailed, scientific presentation of all relevant analysis will be issued during the coming year. It is believed that results of this research in Indonesia will have global relevance in the fight to eradicate this preventable type of blindness by the year 2000—the goal set by WHO.

### **Research Findings**

The preliminary analysis of data from the studies has suggested the following findings:

(1) *All forms of xerophthalmia are associated with vitamin A deficiency and heal rapidly when treated with vitamin A. By implication, almost all of the disease can be prevented if the children receive sufficient vitamin A in their diets.*



(2) *Xerophthalmia and nutritional blindness constitute a significant public health problem throughout Indonesia.*

(3) *Although xerophthalmia and nutritional blindness are significant problems throughout Indonesia, the populations of some areas are at higher risk than those of others.*

(4) *Vitamin A deficiency and xerophthalmia occur in clusters within localities.*

Although this is an area requiring further analysis, it is already clear that xerophthalmia is not spread uniformly throughout the population but occurs in "clusters". What this indicates is that normal children living in the immediate neighbourhood of xerophthalmic children are more likely to be vitamin A deficient than normal children living further away.

(5) *The vast majority of xerophthalmia cases occur in the rural population.*

Rates in the rural areas were usually greater than those of even the urban slums and 85 per cent of the population lives in the rural countryside. Nonetheless, the high level of disease among slum dwelling urban children points to a significant problem in these populations.

(6) *Approximately 55,000 Indonesian children develop potentially blinding corneal xerophthalmia every year.*

The total number for Indonesia as a whole, which would include urban children and older individuals not included in these studies and calculations would be still higher. Results of studies suggest between half and two-thirds (roughly 30 to 40 thousand) of these will suffer significant, permanent visual loss in one or both eyes, primarily the latter.

(7) *Xerophthalmia can be treated just as effectively with oral vitamin A as with injectable vitamin A.*

WHO presently recommends that active xerophthalmia be treated with an immediate injection of 100,000 IU of vitamin A in water miscible followed the next day by an oral dose of a massive dose vitamin A capsule. But clinical research indicates that the 200,000 IU vitamin A capsule administered by mouth on the first day is just as effective as the use of the injection.

(8) *Ideal vitamin A treatment requires at least three doses of 200,000 IU orally: immediately upon admission to a hospital or clinic, the following day and 1-2 weeks later.*

Most children treated with either an injection or oral capsule on admission to a hospital or clinic and again the following day responded rapidly. However, a significant proportion of the patients with severe, generalized malnutrition in both groups either responded slowly or suffered early relapse. Since no evidence of toxicity was ever encountered, it suggests an additional third capsule be administered after 1-2 weeks, though this particular regimen was not actually tested.

(9) *Measles is an important precipitating event in xerophthalmia, especially for blinding forms of corneal destruction.*

Although measles is considered the primary cause of childhood



blindness in Africa, it has not been traditionally considered an important cause of blindness in Indonesia. Yet roughly 20 per cent of the corneal cases seen in the research with classical active xerophthalmia/keratomalacia either had active measles, or a history of measles 2-4 weeks preceding the onset of their eye disease. This strongly suggests measles can in fact precipitate xerophthalmia, either directly, or secondarily through alternations in dietary intake, etc., and is a problem in Indonesia.

*(10) Green leafy vegetables are regularly used by the vast majority of families of xerophthalmic children.*

Over 80 per cent of families of xerophthalmic children surveyed consume green leafy vegetables at least once a day and 99 per cent at least once a week. This indicates special horticultural activities are not widely needed, since green leafy vegetable, a potent source of provitamin A, are apparently available to these families. Instead, efforts will have to be made to change dietary habits, by encouraging increased consumption of these available vegetables by preschool-age children.

*(11) A majority of xerophthalmic children consume items potentially fortifiable with vitamin A.*

Three potentially fortifiable foodstuffs were found to be consumed by a majority of xerophthalmic children surveyed on a regular basis: wheat, refined sugar and monosodium glutamate (MSG).

### **Recommendations**

1. Vitamin A deficiency, xerophthalmia and nutritional blindness is a massive problem in Indonesia requiring urgent action.
2. Although xerophthalmia is a significant problem throughout the country, areas of particularly high risk have been identified in which emergency measures should probably be undertaken immediately if resources prevent addressing the entire country at once as a whole.
3. Three potential forms of prevention activities are already recognized, and working groups should begin to prepare plans and estimate potential benefits and costs for each:
  - (a) fortification of either wheat, refined sugar or MSG. While each is eaten by a majority of xerophthalmic children, the amount varies from area to area, as does the cost and potential benefit of each item.
  - (b) nutrition education programs need to be designed along locally appropriate lines and integrated into planned and existing health and nutrition education programs.
  - (c) administration of 200,000 IU vitamin A capsules every 4-6 months of pre-school children will, in most instances, prevent xerophthalmia and nutritional blindness. Wherever possible their distribution should be incorporated into primary health care/village health-nutrition worker programs. Where such programs do not presently exist, special single purpose workers programs, as in the original distribution scheme, may be needed in high risk areas.

4. Since vitamin A deficiency and xerophthalmia occur in neighbourhood clusters, it is probably effective and cost-efficient to treat all children residing in the same locale as a case of clinical disease rather than only the case itself. This may require that a special outreach program be established at clinics encountering large numbers of cases. This outreach program could provide nutrition education to the community at the same time as delivering the capsules.

5. The high proportion of blinding xerophthalmia seemingly precipitated by measles suggests that measles vaccination (beginning in high risk areas), may help reduce the problem significantly.

6. Since optimal vitamin A therapy can be provided by the use of oral large dose vitamin A capsules, there is no need to produce or import expensive water miscible injectable vitamin A or the needles and syringes required for its use. It is imperative, however, that these capsules be supplied in adequate quantities to all hospitals, clinics and field workers, and that these personnel be trained in recognizing the disease and its treatment. Since there is no need for the oil miscible injectable preparations, consideration might be given to its removal from the market.

7. A simple xerophthalmia monitoring and surveillance system should be established as soon as possible as a means of evaluating the effectiveness of intervention program activities.

8. Further data analysis should be carried out during the coming year to provide answers to the major questions still outstanding: the role of measles, diarrheal illnesses, weaning, protein-calorie malnutrition and dietary practices as contributing factors in the development of xerophthalmia; the duration of protection afforded by the 200,000 IU vitamin A capsules; the frequency with which xerophthalmic children consume potentially fortifiable foodstuffs and the reasons for not consuming larger amounts of vitamin A and provitamin A-rich foods; and the ecologic and socio-economic environment within which the disease arises.

## MASS TREATMENT FOR THE RESTORATION OF SIGHT

by Dr. Rajendra T. Vyas, M.A., LL.B., Ph.D.

Regional Representative (South Asia), Royal Commonwealth Society  
for the Blind, Honorary Secretary, National Association for the Blind,  
India

1. Most of us gathered here have been concerned for decades with services for those who are incurably blind. Very few of us realized till recently that two-thirds of the world's blind, especially in the developing countries, would never have lost sight had they received timely attention and treatment.
2. In recent times, more particularly since the mid-60's, attention has been drawn to the fact that timely action and treatment would not only result in the avoidance of unnecessary misery arising out of preventable and curable blindness but would also obviate the necessity of setting up rehabilitation services for those unnecessarily blinded, and would thus save thousands of dollars that go into the providing of educational and vocational services for the blinded.
3. It is a contradiction of our age and times that while mechanism exists to prevent preventable and cure curable blindness, millions go blind and remain blind till they die.
4. Seventeen million people of the world are disabled by cataract. Each year 1.25 million are added to this list, their vision being lost due to cataract.
5. It is a well-established fact that thousands nay millions are blind, and even become blind with the passage of time, due to no fault of theirs. These men, women and children are doomed to lead a life of destitution, degradation and deprivation due to circumstances completely controllable by human efforts and endeavour.
6. Cataract, completely curable though not yet preventable, is responsible for the blindness of at least five million people in India and seventeen million people throughout the world. Trachoma, which if left untreated would result in total blindness, is completely curable. Is it not a pity that it has blinded two million people for life time, and a hundred million people have serious visual limitation as its after effects? Onchocerciasis (River Blindness) left thousands sightless in West Africa. Glaucoma is responsible for twenty per cent of the world's blindness, and one per cent of all these over the age of forty years may have chronic open angle glaucoma. Keratomalacia in Asia affects 100,000 children each year, and on a global basis it afflicts twenty children in every 10,000 children between one to six years of age. Of those affected, half die because of severe

malnutrition. It is encouraging to note that greater awareness now prevails on the part of those concerned with work for the blind both at Government and non-Government level, to take steps to prevent and treat preventable and treatable types of blindness.

7. **Problem:** While technology does exist to eliminate preventable and curable blindness, more than scarcity of finance, the appalling paucity of ophthalmic and para-ophthalmic personnel and the great dearth of hospital accommodation in developing countries, are factors responsible for the ever-increasing incidence of blindness. How grave is the situation, is apparent from the fact that for a vast country such as India having a population of seven hundred million people, they have only about four thousand ophthalmic surgeons and twelve thousand ophthalmic beds. Contrast this with the staggering figure of five million people blind simply because ophthalmic services cannot reach them to perform a cataract operation which just takes three minutes. Bangladesh, with a population of over a hundred million people, has hardly 30 ophthalmic surgeons and not more than 300 ophthalmic beds in hospitals. For the whole of Africa, they have three hundred eye doctors where an estimated number of three million people need cataract surgery. Again, while the great majority of the affected people live in villages and rural areas, the ophthalmic surgeons and eye hospitals limited as they are in number, are concentrated in towns, far, far away for a villager to reach them.

8. **Mass treatment only alternative:**

Do these seventeen million cataract blind people, most of whom live in developing countries have to remain blind till they die? There is no possibility that fully fledged ophthalmic services would spring up during their lifetime. The one and only approach is 'MASS TREATMENT FOR THE RESTORATION OF SIGHT', to be provided through an Eye Camp approach.

9. To understand the working of eye camp, let us visit one in a typical Indian village. By the only available railway train, you arrive at a railway station at an unearthly hour of 4 a.m. You are picked up by a Land-Rover presented to the organizers of the eye camp by the Royal Commonwealth Society for the Blind. Driving through dusty and bumpy roads for about three hours, you arrive at the site of the eye camp, some 80 km away, you are surrounded by a sea of humanity. Men, women and children, some clad, some half-clad, have all congregated for their day of deliverance. So great is the rush of patients that tents have been erected to provide them with accommodation.
10. The local school building has been converted into a temporary eye hospital. Desks and tables have been removed, rooms washed and prepared for the patients. The local villagers come forward to serve as volunteers, patients queue up in the school compound for registration. Some come walking from miles away, some use the bullock cart, while others come by buses, all of them praying that they



would get back their sight. A team of doctors who have donated their time and skill examine the patients in an improvised dark room and select them for surgery. The operation theatre made out of the school assembly room, has six ophthalmic surgeons operating simultaneously. The moment the patient is operated, volunteers quickly take him away to the large tent-wards on a stretcher and other volunteers bring in a new patient. At the end of the day which began at 7 a.m. altogether 240 men and women are operated for cataract. At the end of this eye camp which had lasted for two weeks altogether 6,915 eye patients were examined and treated, and of these 2,273 people completely blind due to cataract had their sight restored. The organizers ran a free kitchen to provide breakfast, lunch, and dinner to patients and each escort, which almost totalled five thousand people per day, and all this was free of charge. This, the Bagidhora eye camp in the Indian State of Rajasthan, was one of the large eye camps supported by the Royal Commonwealth Society for the Blind. All eye camps are not as large. In most of the eye camps the total number of patients examined and treated range between five hundred to two thousand and those operated on are about two hundred to three hundred.

#### **11. Mobile Ophthalmic Unit:**

Yet another effective adjunct to eye camps is the provision of mobile ophthalmic units equipped with necessary surgical instruments and drugs. These units are in a way an extended arm of a base eye hospital to reach remote villages whose inhabitants for want of money and facilities cannot visit centres for eye treatment.

#### **12. National Plan:**

The Government of India have evolved a bold and imaginative National Plan for the Control of Blindness and Visual Impairment. Under this programme mobile ophthalmic units will eventually cover the rural areas of India and base hospitals in the rural areas will be set up to provide ophthalmic treatment.

Mass treatment to cure curable blindness through eye camps has brought hope and cheer to blind men and women. In India alone since the Royal Commonwealth Society for the Blind launched the EYES OF INDIA CAMPAIGN through rural eye camps in January, 1970, eyes of over 3.4 million people have been examined and treated, and 572,420 people rendered blind due to cataract have had their sight restored. Careful scrutiny of eye camp statistics have given very encouraging results. The rate of success at an eye camp is as high as 94 per cent. Bearing in mind that these eye camps are held in improvised hospital-like accommodation, these statistics are indeed very heartening. We hope and pray that efficacy of mass treatment for the restoration of sight through eye camps so convincingly established in the Indian sub-continent will be copied elsewhere, where the need exists.



## **BUSINESS SESSION 2**

### **SIXTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY—Antwerp, Belgium**

Monday afternoon, August 6, 1979

#### **REPORT BY THE TREASURER ON THE FINANCIAL SITUATION AND BUDGET PROPOSALS FOR 1980/84**

I should say that the Financial Report having been approved, the Finance Committee were faced with the comparatively simple task, that of implementing the resolution of this Committee increasing all categories of membership fees and, consequently, unanimously now submit this Budget to you for your approval. I think your consideration of this must take into account two things: that the figures that have been put before you are, of course, dependent upon the financial structure of the organization administratively remaining the same and also of the willingness, of which we have had most encouraging reports from delegates of the rather better-off countries, and that is for the support of the new special fund by additional contributions over and above their membership fees. So therefore, if we come down to the figures in detail, we take our annual income first for the whole of the quinquennium which commences on the 1st of January next year and finishes on the 31st of December in 1984. If we take the figures which are the only ones available to us at the moment, that is the up-to-date figure of 206 representative members, 67 associate members, 4 international members, and 3 sponsoring members, at the new rates of subscription, that is at \$250, \$75, \$1,000 and \$1,250 respectively for the various categories of membership, we get an annual income from subscriptions which will remain, of course, throughout the next quinquennium of \$64,275. If you multiply this by five, you will, I am assured by the people who have checked my figures, get a total of \$321,375, so just remember \$321,000-plus.

If we look at our figures for expenditure, one of the first charges on our expenditure in the next quinquennium is the various subventions that we make to our Consultative and Standing Committees. We have a constitutional obligation to make a subvention of \$3,000 during a quinquennium to the ICEVH. We have a similar obligation, which has existed for the last quinquennium and which it is not proposed to increase in the next quinquennium, of a subvention of \$2,000 for the quinquennium to Standing Committees. In practice, not all the Standing Committees draw this subvention. We are especially indebted to committees like the European Committee, who are, I am glad to say, self-financing. Therefore, out of the various committees which this

World Council has, we have taken subventions for only eleven of them, and these are the African Regional Committee, Asian Regional Committee, the Latin-America Caribbean Regional Committee, North America Oceania Committee, the Prevention of Blindness Committee, the Committee on Social Development, the Louis Braille Memorial, the Sports Committee, the Deaf-Blind Committee, the Rehabilitation, Training and Employment Committee, and Cultural Affairs. So a subvention of eleven committees at \$2,000 a year gives you another \$22,000 and that means \$25,000 in respect of committee expenditure for the quinquennium.

Now you come to the administrative expenses and the administrative expenses are principally in relation to the Paris Office. The best estimate that we can make of the expenditure in the Paris Office for the next 12 months is \$40,000. If you increase that amount by 10 per cent annually to meet the continuing trend towards world inflation, and 10 per cent is a rather more modest figure than that which is estimated by international financial experts, you arrive at a progressive total of \$244,288 expenditure for the Paris Office.

Then we come to the contribution which the World Council will make towards the Secretary General's office. This was agreed, as you remember, on the recommendation of the Executive Committee to be at \$15,000 instead of the totally unrealistic contribution of \$5,000 which we have been making for some ten years past. And that figure adjusted for an annual rate of inflation comes to \$91,565.

The expenses of the Treasurer's office are quite minimal, because most of the payments that are made out of the Treasurer's office are in relation to the committees, the Consultative or Standing Committees. So the Finance Committee therefore put in a purely nominal figure of \$5,000 for the expenses of the Treasurer's office to cover any necessary administrative or travel expenses, in hope that an arrangement will continue on similar lines to what was operated in the past quinquennium, and that is that an organization such as the Royal National Institute for the Blind will continue to make its office facilities available free of cost to the World Council.

The total of all these figures that I have mentioned adds up to \$365,853, which if you set that off against a figure of expenditure of \$321,375, gives you a potential deficit for the quinquennium of \$44,478. Now how is this to be met? Well, as you know, you have already accepted the proposal that this should be made up by the formation of a Special Fund, which means contributions over and above the increased rate of subscription by some of the wealthier member countries of this organization. We have proof of their good faith in the sense that they have many of them contributed most generously during the last quinquennium and enabled us not only to survive but to put ourselves into a reasonably good financial situation. And therefore, we are budgeting on the expectation that we shall not get less than what we have received in total during the present quinquennium, and that figure is \$125,000. So the first charge on that is obviously your deficit on administrative expenditure, and you are then left with a balance of \$80,500 to do three things. And all those three things are matters which

you have delegated within the discretion of your next team of Honorary Officers working in consultation, where it is thought necessary, with the Chairmen of the Regional Committees. These things are, first of all, with regard to the augmentation of subscriptions. This we estimate may take up as much as \$50,000 during the quinquennium. That then leaves you a balance of \$30,522 to be devoted towards first of all a question of any necessary travel grants, together with this most important assistance to the Aid to developing countries Fund, which from the point of this General Assembly is virtually extinguished, but I think it was the unanimous desire both of the Executive and indeed of this General Assembly that some injection of funds should be put into Aid to developing countries Committee, in order to enable them to do some meaningful development work on behalf of the World Council in the developing countries. So as I say, you are left with this total of \$30,522 plus the income that you get from your now—I am thankful to say—quite considerable investments. But it is absolutely impossible for the Finance Committee or me or anyone else to forecast how the international money market will go, so far as interest rates are concerned, in the next five years. So we have to leave that figure being a rather nebulous one of \$30,000 plus your investment income, which can be devoted towards travel grants and especially to the aid to developing countries. But on the basis of this, what must only be of course a very broad estimate of income and expenditure, it would appear that the wisdom of the Executive and the General Assembly in putting up the membership subscription in all four categories to the levels that they did recommend will be just about enough to see us through during the next quinquennium, and yet at the same time make a meaningful contribution both to travel assistance, augmentation of subscriptions and aid to developing countries. And that, Mr. Chairman, is the report of the Finance Committee, or at least the report of the Honorary Treasurer approved and submitted by me on behalf of the Finance Committee, which I would have pleasure to move now and then after it has been duly seconded, I will try and enlighten anyone who might have any questions on the subject.

(Moved by the Chairman of the Finance Committee, Seconded by Harold Roberts and unanimously APPROVED).

## REPORT FROM THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE ON AMENDMENTS TO THE CONSTITUTION

The Executive Committee had received, at its meeting on July 31, two proposals for amendment of the Constitution from the North America-Oceania Region.

### ITEM 1

It was RESOLVED that the number of Vice-Presidents should be increased from five (5) to six (6), one from each region.

It was further RESOLVED that the Vice-Presidents should be Chairmen of WCWB regions,

The Executive Committee DECIDED

- (a) to *recommend* this General Assembly to amend Article VI of the WCWB Constitution, entitled OFFICERS, Section 1, Paragraph 2, Line 1, to read *six (6) Vice-Presidents*, one from each of the six regions,
- (b) to *reject* the proposal that the Vice-Presidents shall be Chairmen of the regions, elected by their regions.

### ITEM 2

It was further RESOLVED that the regional representation of North and Central America, at present five delegates, South America, at present two delegates, and Oceania one delegate, should be changed to five (5) delegates for the North America-Oceania Region, including the former Oceania representative, and three (3) from Latin America.

The Executive Committee DECIDED

to *recommend* this General Assembly to amend Article V, THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE, Section 1, Paragraph 2, as follows:

- (a) Line 2—to delete “North and Central America” and insert *North America-Oceania*.
- (b) Line 3—to delete “South America” and insert *Latin America and the Caribbean*.
- (c) Line 4—to delete “Oceania”.
- (d) to increase the representation on the Executive Committee from the new Latin America and Caribbean Region from two (2) to three (3).
- (e) to decrease the representation from the North America-Oceania Region from five (5) to three (3), due to the present over-representation from that area.

The General Assembly decided:

to *approve* Item 1 (a) and (b), Item 2 (a) to (d), but *rejected* Item 2 (e), leaving the present representation from North America-Oceania at five (5).



## REPORT OF THE LOUIS BRAILLE MEMORIAL COMMITTEE

by André Nicolle, Chairman

The paper I have the honour of presenting to you sets forth the principal activities of the Louis Braille Museum together with a report of its management since the Fifth World Assembly of the World Council for the Welfare of the Blind, held in São Paulo in August 1974.

I have already reported to the Executive Committee at its meeting in Riyadh in March 1977 on the development of the museum in 1975 and 1976. I shall therefore only mention the really important events of this period. For further details please refer to the report submitted to the Executive Committee in Riyadh, copies of which are at your disposal here. I shall thus be able to pay more attention to the years 1977 and 1978 and the activities planned by the Committee for the near future.

In 1975 and 1976 the museum underwent considerable restoration and modernization; we tried to restore Louis Braille's birthplace to its original XIXth century aspect, at the time the Braille family lived there, and also display to better advantage the souvenirs of Louis Braille and the progressive development of Braille which resulted in its application to new disciplines and its universal recognition.

It should be noted that some new objects of great interest have been acquired by the museum. We wish to thank the donors for their generosity, as these objects enable visitors to understand the reasons for the success of the Braille system and all it represents for the blind.

In May 1975, a Congress was organized at UNESCO by WCWB European Regional Committee to celebrate the 150th anniversary of the Braille system and to take stock of its use in modern times. On this occasion, the congressists, representing some thirty countries, made a pilgrimage to Coupvray to visit Louis Braille's birthplace. Our president, Mr. Boris Zimin, profoundly moved by the extreme simplicity of the house where the Braille system was conceived, decided to donate a marble plaque to the village of Coupvray to commemorate this international meeting in honour of Louis Braille. This plaque made in USSR, was unveiled on November 6, 1976, at the monument erected to the memory of Louis Braille in Coupvray, in the presence of Mr. Saakian, First Secretary of the Embassy of the Soviet Union in Paris, the Prefect of the Department of Seine-et-Marne, the Mayor of Coupvray and numerous French associations of and for the blind. Mr. Achille Dyckmans, Honorary President of the Ligue Braille, Belgium, was also present.

The interest aroused in the Louis Braille Museum during the 1975 International Congress continued throughout the following years resulting in an increased number of visitors, both French and foreign.



And it was thus that the members of the ICEVH General Assembly, meeting in Paris in 1977, visited Coupvray on August 8 of that year to render homage in their turn to the memory of Louis Braille.

During this period we endeavoured to carry out the projects submitted to WCWB Executive Committee in March 1977 within our financial possibilities. We thus had a new set of post-cards printed and a reprint was made of the leaflet about the museum.

My colleagues on the Committee and myself wish to express our deep appreciation to the curator, Mr. Jean Roblin, and Mr. Taillefer, the museum attendant, who, during this period, as in the past, have carried out their tasks with competence and efficiency which is beyond praise, doing their best at all times, particularly for foreign delegations, to evoke the life and work of Louis Braille and give their visitors all the explanations they need.

With regard to financial matters, I reported to the Executive Committee in Riyadh that the interest aroused in the Braille system and its inventor through the holding of the 1975 Congress, had resulted in a considerable increase in donations to the Museum; thanks to these donations, the work of restoration and modernization was able to be carried out. But, as time went on, the amount of annual contributions sent by WCWB members considerably diminished and we ran the risk of not being able to carry out satisfactorily the work with which you had entrusted us. This is why I suggested to the Executive Committee to send a new recommendation to all WCWB members to increase their voluntary contribution from \$8 to \$20.

The Executive Committee unanimously agreed to this proposal and our President himself sent a letter to members requesting them to respond generously to this appeal. As a result of this measure, the amount of annual contributions received from WCWB members, other than French, considerably increased—from FF.5,336 in 1976 to FF.8,200 in 1977 and FF.10,727 in 1978.

However, on examination of the attached accounts, as at December 31, 1977 and December 31, 1978 respectively, it will be seen that:

- (a) In spite of the progress mentioned, the total contribution from WCWB members, other than French, received in 1978 by the Louis Braille Museum, only corresponds to approximately \$2,400. Whereas, if the recommendation to the Executive Committee, requesting WCWB affiliates to increase their contributions to \$20 per member had been complied with, the Museum should have received approximately \$4,000, since the number of members in the General Assembly is about 200.
- (b) Even by adding the annual amount of the WCWB subvention of \$300 to the contributions from non-French members, their participation in the expenses of the Louis Braille Museum only came to 25 per cent in 1977 and 37 per cent in 1978, which would appear to be insufficient.

In fact, the budget of the Museum was only balanced thanks to two big contributions, i.e. \$4,500 from the French National Committee for the Welfare of the Blind and \$2,250 from the Union of the Blind of

the Resistance. But there is no certainty that even with the best intentions, the French organizations can continue to make such important contributions.

In addition it may be asked: is not the fact that one country supports 60 per cent of the expenses of the museum while all the other countries together only cover 40 per cent, in contradiction with the spirit of international responsibility which guided the WCWB General Assembly when it decided to take over the expenses of conservation, upkeep and caretaking of Louis Braille's birthplace? Of course, the French organizations intend to prove their attachment to the memory of Louis Braille by more than mere words, but they are afraid that they may not be able to continue by themselves to assume more than 60 per cent of the expenses; expenses for which WCWB generously decided to take the responsibility.

This is all the more worrying because the state of Louis Braille's birthplace and the care and conservation of its collections which are exhibited there will make it necessary for us to undertake some relatively important work. The curator has recently noted a certain amount of wear and tear in the museum itself, and serious inconvenience in maintaining the collections exhibited there in good state, owing to the dampness of the museum in winter because of insufficient heating.

A French Government-certificated architect whom we consulted estimates that in order to remedy these drawbacks it will be necessary to effect certain repairs to the masonry and to the ceiling revetment and, above all, to install a heating system in the different rooms in order to maintain in winter a high enough temperature so as to avoid serious damage to the museum's collections by the dampness which persists in the Paris region for most of the year.

From the estimates we have made, this work would involve expenses amounting to about FF.20,000. So, the members of the Louis Braille Memorial Committee are very concerned about its financial situation.

They therefore earnestly request the members of the World Assembly to give thought to the problem of the financing of the Museum in order to arrive at a rational solution. Of course, the French members are conscious of the duty they have to the memory of Louis Braille and his birthplace; nevertheless, they address an urgent appeal to their colleagues in other countries for the substantial support they need in accordance with the ideal which has guided the founders of WCWB and that all have so magnificently served during thirty years.

They wish to express in advance their deep appreciation.

## STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS 1977

	Credit		Debit
Donations from French associations	...	6 985 F	Museum attendant's salary and social security and other payments ... ..
Donations from foreign associations	...	8 200 F	Expenses and honorarium of curator ... ..
Subventions ... ..	...	10 165 F	Purchase of postcards ... ..
Sale of postcards	...	496 F	Overhead expenses ... ..
Sale of discs	...	1 110 F	
Sale of books	...	2 925 F	
Collecting box ... ..	...	668 F	
Total income ... ..	...	30 549 F	Total expenditure ... ..
			38 550 F

Deficit 1977: 8 000 F.

## STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS 1978

Credit		Debit
Donations from French associations ...	...	Museum attendant's salary and social security and other payments ...
Donations from foreign associations ...	...	Expenses and honorarium of curator ...
Sale of postcards ...	...	Purchase of postcards ...
Sale of books ...	...	Overhead expenses ...
Sale of discs ...	...	
Collecting box ...	...	
Total income ...	...	Total expenditure ...
		Deficit 1977 ...
Surplus: 7 191 F.		

**PROFESSIONAL SESSION 8**  
**COOPERATION IN REHABILITATION AND**  
**EMPLOYMENT**

Tuesday morning, August 7, 1979

Chairman: Mr. Bengt Lindqvist, Sweden

**REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON REHABILITATION,**  
**TRAINING AND EMPLOYMENT**

by Bengt Lindqvist, Sweden

The Fifth Assembly of WCWB, held in São Paulo, Brazil in 1974, adopted a new structure of standing committees. The new Committee on Rehabilitation, Training and Employment replaces the two former committees on urban and rural employment. As its name implies, the Committee on Rehabilitation, Training and Employment should cover the whole range from basic rehabilitation to vocational rehabilitation, vocational orientation and guidance, placement and employment.

**Composition**

The Committee was composed as follows:

Mr. Ousman A. Khafizov, USSR  
Mr. Tom J. Parker, United Kingdom  
Captain H. J. M. Desai, India  
Mr. J. K. Holdsworth, Australia  
Mr. Hernando Pradilla-Cobos, Colombia  
Mr. Frank van Schendel, Netherlands  
Mr. Mohamed Rajhi, Tunisia  
Mr. Willy Marhauer, Federal Republic of Germany  
Mr. Bengt Lindqvist, Sweden (*Chairman*)

During the period under review, the committee lost three of its members. Mr. Marhauer died towards the end of 1976 and Mr. van Schendel and Mr. Rajhi left the committee for personal reasons. Towards the end of the period, Dr. Horst Geissler, Federal Republic of Germany and Mr. Bob Jaekle, USA, accepted to serve as new committee members.

**Meetings**

The first meeting was held at the ILO Headquarters in Geneva on October 7-10, 1975. During the meeting a working plan was adopted

and the committee had an excellent opportunity to study the ILO Blindoc Service on the spot.

A second and informal meeting of the committee was held in connection with the meeting of the Executive Committee of WCWB in Riyadh from February 28 to March 3, 1977. This time the committee members had an opportunity to check what had been done up till then and discuss some of the current problems. The Executive Committee of WCWB instructed the committee on Rehabilitation, Training and Employment to form sub-committees on coordination of research and guide dog matters.

A third and last meeting of the committee was held from February 27 to March 3, 1978 in Moscow. At this meeting the presentation of the results of the work of the committee was discussed and the committee had the opportunity to study some of the excellent production units run by the All-Russia Association of the Blind.

### **Plan and Projects**

The committee members noted with some concern that the committee had a huge field of work to cover. However, from the beginning the committee decided to adopt a practical approach and therefore selected some specific areas where the committee could make concrete contributions to the development of work for the blind in different areas of the world. During the first meeting several projects were formulated where information should be collected and distributed, models of programmes be described and recommendations given concerning the organization and content of work in some areas. The results achieved during the period are summarized in the following sections of this report.

### **BASIC REHABILITATION**

During the committee meeting in Geneva the great importance of pre-vocational or basic rehabilitation was pointed out. It was also stated that this area of rehabilitation had so far been neglected, especially in many developing countries. The committee therefore decided to produce a document in which the present philosophies and experiences of basic rehabilitation should be described. The main objective of the project should be to provide guidance to countries in the process of creating programmes for basic rehabilitation.

Captain Homi Desai generously volunteered to write a book on the matter. This offer was accepted and a small working group set up within the committee to assist and advise the project.

During the period the committee observed with great interest the new domiciliary programmes of basic rehabilitation which have been started in India, originally by Helen Keller International. It was decided to add a chapter describing such programmes which, in a highly interesting way, supplement the more traditional, centre-based rehabilitation programmes. The book will include chapters on the importance of rehabilitation, the organization and content of basic rehabilitation, chapters on staff and economy and will also include suggested plans of action on different administrative levels.



The committee hopes that this book, entitled "Planning of Basic Rehabilitation", will be available by the time of the Sixth World Assembly.

## **Mobility**

In orientation and mobility the long cane technique has made considerable progress during the period. The adoption of a resolution by the Fifth World Assembly of WCWB has certainly contributed to this development. But of even greater importance is the production of a brochure on orientation and mobility by the European Regional Committee. This brochure gives an excellent illustration of what orientation and mobility is and what it means to a blind person. Our committee highly recommends this brochure which is available from the National Association of Blind and Partially Sighted in the German Democratic Republic.

Acting in support of the resolution on mobility adopted by the Fifth World Assembly, the committee has set up two main projects which could further promote the adoption of the long cane technique throughout the world:

1. Through Keith Holdsworth, the committee has made a survey concerning the training of mobility instructors.  
Based on the results of the survey, an interim list of institutions will be presented by the time of the Sixth World Assembly. We hope to include in the report information on the programmes of the institutions and also the possibility of receiving students from abroad.
2. Through Keith Holdsworth, the committee has also worked out a model programme for the training of mobility instructors. It is hoped that a report of this project will be available at the Sixth World Assembly.

## **LOW VISION**

The problem of finding the best and most suitable programmes for the utilization of residual vision—low vision rehabilitation programmes—is well known to many countries. The committee has found that philosophies and programmes differ greatly between some of the most experienced countries in this field. The committee therefore decided to call an expert meeting with representatives of some of the most experienced countries with different solutions. The main objective of the meeting would be to try to find a common ground between the different programmes for low vision rehabilitation.

A meeting along these lines was held in Sweden in September 1978. Experts from five countries: Denmark, Sweden, United Kingdom, USA and USSR participated. The programme included discussions on: What is Low Vision?; Diagnostic Methods in Assessing Residual Vision; Methods of Adapting Optical Aids; Methods in Training of Residual Vision; Effects of Low Vision Rehabilitation on Living Conditions.

The conference took place in a cooperative atmosphere and the group of experts succeeded in agreeing on a detailed functional model

for the organization of low vision rehabilitation including the following main functions:

1. Identification
2. Eye Unit
3. Low Vision Unit
4. Environmental and Behavioural Variables
5. Follow-up.

Among the things which were emphasized by the conference participants was the importance of careful diagnosis of the residual vision and the actual training of residual vision in different realistic situations. There also seems to be a consensus on the need for a new profession within this area—the low vision rehabilitation teacher or visual therapist. A report of the meeting will be available by the time of the Sixth World Assembly.

## JOB OPPORTUNITIES

When the committee formed its working programme at its meeting in Geneva, we decided to make two contributions in the field of job opportunities. The committee decided to take various actions to support the strengthening and further development of the BLINDOC Service. Secondly, the committee also wanted to produce a document on models for special workshops for the blind.

## BLINDOC

The plan to set up an international documentation service for blind and visually handicapped persons developed out of the deliberations at the 1969 WCWB World Assembly in New Delhi. The initiative was then taken to develop close cooperation with the ILO.

The ILO accepted to implement such a project in its work programme; early in 1974, in collaboration with the World Council for the Welfare of the Blind, a new information service was launched which was identified as BLINDOC. The principal objectives were to collect information on new approaches of integrating the blind and visually handicapped into active life, and to report on these efforts and techniques to interested organizations, agencies and rehabilitation specialists around the world. Up to the end of 1978 over 280 such reports have been issued; the distribution list for BLINDOC despatches has been growing steadily. The reports are based on data in the growing volume of publications and periodicals on blind matters, as well as documentation on technical cooperation projects in developing countries, expert missions, seminars, training courses, etc. The World Council for the Welfare of the Blind (WCWB) and its member organizations in various countries have been helpful in securing additional material.

BLINDOC information is intended primarily to be a help to field workers and practitioners in blind rehabilitation. The documentation in the form of abstracts extends to a broad range of functions, from assessment, guidance, counselling, to job training, placement, organization of workshops, adaptation of jobs, application of technical aids and

assistive devices, etc. Moreover, BLINDOC seeks to gather and present relevant information on new legislative actions, administrative provisions, supportive social and psychological rehabilitation services, innovative practices by employers' and workers' organizations, producers' cooperatives of the visually handicapped and other activities. The effectiveness of the service should also facilitate an exchange of experience between BLINDOC users.

The principal abstracting language for BLINDOC texts is English; within the limits of available resources, abstracts are also provided in French or Spanish. Contacts with other documentation centres that collect rehabilitation literature have been established to build up collaboration in data exchange, in the development of common indexing terms and, in the long run, improve the capacities of response to information requests.

The further development of BLINDOC requires that organizations and individual workers who serve the blind and visually handicapped share their experiences so that others may benefit from them. The co-operation of all BLINDOC users is earnestly invited. Any relevant publications, articles, report abstracts or summaries, as well as enquiries for information can be sent to:

International Labour Office  
Vocational Rehabilitation Section, BLINDOC  
CH-1211 GENEVA 22, Switzerland

In all, the ILO BLINDOC Service is an example of close collaboration between international, governmental, and voluntary organizations in the rehabilitation field, seeking to promote effective services to blind and visually handicapped persons everywhere.

### **Booklet on special workshops**

The objective of this project was to describe some different models of special workshops to illustrate some different jobs which could be suitable for special workshops and to present a plan for the starting of new special workshops. Mainly this material is intended for countries with little or no experience in providing employment for the blind.

Experts from three countries, the United Kingdom, USA and USSR, were invited to present their national models. The representative of the UK, Tom Parker, who is also a committee member, was asked to present a plan on how to start a new special workshop. As a result of this project a booklet entitled "Special Workshops for the Blind" will be available at WCWB's Sixth World Assembly.

### **CONFERENCE ON THE UNIFICATION OF STANDARDS FOR DIGITALLY ENCODED BRAILLE**

The Executive Committee of WCWB, at its Riyadh meeting, instructed the Committee on Rehabilitation, Training and Employment to make an effort to unify the different codes used by manufacturers of new Braille reading devices. The committee therefore invited manufacturers and representatives of service and consumer organizations to

a conference at Unesco headquarters in Paris on May 2 and 3, 1978. As a preparation for the conference, the Swedish Institute for the Handicapped made a survey on manufacturers in order to explore the present situation.

Some interesting progress seems to have been made at the conference. Among other things, the conference suggested a special working group which should give technical advice to WCWB headquarters concerning the further standardization work. A full report of the conference is already available and can be ordered through the Swedish Federation of the Visually Handicapped.

## GUIDE DOG MATTERS

During its meeting in Riyadh the Executive Committee decided to establish a sub-committee on guide dog matters. Among other things this committee has the following tasks:

- (a) to stimulate the future exchange of experience in guide dog matters;
- (b) to provide consultation for countries which are going to start guide dog training;
- (c) to organize an international conference every fourth year.

Since then our committee has had considerable difficulty in finding members for the sub-committee. Mrs. Groen-Korthoff has now accepted to serve as chairman, the committee members have been appointed, and it is our hope that the work of the committee will now begin.

## RESEARCH COORDINATION

The Executive Committee also decided to establish a sub-committee on the coordination of research. So far, the only thing we have had time to do is to try to establish cooperation with the research committee of the ICEVH. Up to now, however, no concrete plans have been worked out.



## **MODELS OF BASIC REHABILITATION**

by Captain Homi Desai, India

Basic Rehabilitation, to my mind, is the very FOUNDATION on which restoration to normalcy of the visually handicapped—for that matter of all disabled persons—is based.

If the foundation is strong, the client will, to the extent permitted by his disability, return to near normalcy and blossom to the full extent of his potential.

The philosophy of Rehabilitation is simple. It aims at the restoration of the disabled to the fullest physical, mental, social and vocational usefulness of which they are capable.

### **Purpose of Rehabilitation**

The purpose of Rehabilitation is to restore FUNCTION, restore CONFIDENCE and restore INDEPENDENCE to the handicapped clients. The escalation of impairment is prevented. The disabling conditions are reduced. Psychological adjustment and overcoming of emotional and other disturbances greatly assists the client on his way to normalcy. The residual abilities are developed and utilized in the service of the clients. The clients are assisted to return to normal useful lives within the community. The Medical Rehabilitation team ensures restoration of function to the fullest extent permitted by the disability. Once the shattered confidence of the client in himself is restored by the Rehabilitation team, half the battle is won. Independence means a tremendous lot to the visually handicapped. Everything possible is done to restore fully their independence. Restoration of function, confidence and independence could be achieved by sound and scientific Rehabilitation practices and by systematic training.

### **Objectives**

What is the immediate objective of Basic Rehabilitation? It aims at making the client fully accept his disability, know the limitations imposed by it, and assists him in adjusting to his severe handicap. After orientation and adjustment, after restoring his self-confidence, after giving him the basic skills, after psychological and vocational assessment, vocational training and the total development of the client is planned. The training leads to development of social graces of the client. The social goal of Rehabilitation is to happily settle the client in normal family and social life.

The ultimate objective of all Rehabilitation is to totally develop the client to his fullest potential, to uplift him in life, to re-integrate him in the community and to resettle him in congenial and remunerative employment and to lead him to economic and social independence and happiness.



## Losses consequent on blindness

The late Rev. Father Thomas J. Carroll has listed as many as twenty Losses Consequent upon Blindness. He has grouped these losses under six major categories, viz., Basic Losses of Psychological Security, Loss in Basic Skills like Mobility and Techniques of Daily Living, Loss in Communication—both written and spoken, Loss in Appreciation of the Pleasurable and Beautiful, Loss concerning Occupation and Financial Status and resulting Losses to the Whole Personality.

Basic Rehabilitation endeavours all the time to minimize the adverse affects of these very major and severe losses. The blind have to place a lot of reliance on vicarious knowledge. Their basic resource is the "mind". Through the mind, the blind perceive their surroundings. The mind must be trained to be methodical.

Methodical Training enables visually handicapped persons to develop their residual senses, to make the fullest use thereof, to overcome psychological and emotional set-backs or disturbances, to regain function and confidence, to learn vocations, to choose a career and to develop therein to their full potential, to improve their social graces and to equip them to squarely face the battle of life in a highly competitive and increasingly materialistic world.

Basic Rehabilitation can thus help newly blinded persons to successfully overcome the multiple and often overlapping losses referred to. If undertaken systematically and thoroughly, it can help the client regain his competence and help in his re-integration into the normal mainstream. Psychological and emotional adjustment would be much better and the client assisted to regain his lost confidence and skills.

## Methodology

The Rehabilitation team all the time tries to adjust the client to his new life of darkness. He is trained in personal management, personal grooming, self care and techniques of daily living. Wise guidance and counselling puts the client on the right path. Observation of other blind persons who have successfully overcome their handicap gradually restores his confidence in himself. In addition to adjusting and orienting the client, the project staff unobtrusively but continuously assesses and evaluates him. Intensive training in outdoor and indoor mobility steadily improves his independence of movement. The client is taught the use of various aids, appliances and equipment. Home economics and domestic science also make him independent in home management. He can prepare his tea, coffee, breakfast and even light meals. Skills of communication enable the client to overcome the loss of ease of written and spoken communication. Physical Training and corrective therapy restore his body to physical fitness. Vocational Training facilities enable the client to know the various occupations which could, with advantage, be followed. The choice of a career becomes easy.

Basic Rehabilitation endeavours to develop the client from all possible angles and continuously assists him in minimizing the adverse effects of the losses consequent upon the onset of blindness. At the same time, it enables the expert Inter Disciplinary Rehabilitation Team

to continuously assess and evaluate the client and help and guide him in the choice of a career suitable to his hopes, aspirations and abilities.

### **Some Basic Principles**

Before I discuss some typical Models in Rehabilitation, I would like to emphasize a few general principles. All in the field of Rehabilitation would agree that

- emphasis be placed on Residual Abilities of the client and **not** on his Disabilities,
- limitations imposed by the Disability be fully accepted by the client, the family and the community,
- training in the use of Low Vision Aids be made a part of Basic Rehabilitation,
- miracles of modern rehabilitation be continuously brought to the notice of newly blinded clients so that it gives them added confidence,
- clients be made to realize that few persons are so disabled that they cannot put to good use their remaining capacities,
- excellent results are obtained through comprehensive personalized individual training and services,
- no generalization be permitted nor the blind treated as a group,
- the fullest possible use be made of all available normal community resources so that rehabilitation programmes become economical,
- negative attitudes of pity, misguided charity, sympathy are replaced by positive, constructive, developmental and innovative attitudes,
- modern Management techniques be made full use of by all Agencies engaged in the rehabilitation of the blind,
- no country can afford the luxury of idle manpower—much less the developing countries, and
- the army of disabled—especially in the Third World—*must* be rehabilitated, trained and developed to become productive and contributive members of the community.

The world over, Rehabilitation has proved—beyond all doubts—that all these could be successfully achieved.

### **Priority for Client Development**

The blind have necessarily to live in a world predominantly of the sighted. In an age of population explosion, automation, inflation and of growing unemployment, the blind would have to increasingly live in a highly competitive and materialistic world. Unless they are trained to face the difficult battle of life ahead, unless they develop to the fullest extent of their potential, unless they make the most of all available developmental opportunities, unless they are fully ready for the chances ahead, they would find it increasingly difficult to compete on an equal footing.

To my mind, client development is, therefore, a *must*. While doing this, *human dignity* of the individual has to be respected. In all programmes, the client should receive top priority. The programmes

- should be client-oriented. The client should be encouraged to
- judiciously use *residual vision*, if any,
  - develop correct, positive, constructive and innovative *attitudes*,
  - *try for excellence* in all that he attempts,
  - *be prepared* for all opportunities ahead,
  - develop all-round *skills*, especially his *memory*,
  - learn *self-help* and cultivate dedication and commitment,
  - be *methodical* in everything, especially his work,
  - increase his *self-reliance*, *independence* and *adaptability*,
  - inculcate *safe methods* and *safety first habits*,
  - develop *self-confidence* and win the confidence of others,
  - *excel in human relations* and know how to win friends and influence people,
  - realize that *tomorrow begins today*,
  - adequately *prepare* himself for facing the battle of life ahead in a highly competitive world and
  - set *goals, targets, ideals* and develop his *leadership* and *creativity*.

### **Organizational Models in Rehabilitation**

I would briefly refer here to four models in Rehabilitation successfully tried out in India. They could easily be adapted to suit the needs of any developing country. The models are suitable for both urban and rural areas. They are low cost and high yield and have proved highly successful in client development.

#### **MODEL I: THE DEPARTMENT OF REHABILITATION**

At the Third All India Conference on Work for the Blind held in Bombay from January 19 to 22, 1977, I presented a paper on "Planning Basic Rehabilitation of the Blind". Following discussions, a resolution unanimously demanded the setting up—by the National Association for the Blind—of a Department of Rehabilitation. As a result, a Scheme was framed. It was discussed with friends from Australia. They were greatly impressed. They kindly arranged financial assistance from Force 10. The Department was thus established on April 1, 1978. It is intended that all newly blind clients or those who are not privileged to receive prior rehabilitation training should be assisted by this Department right from the stage of the onset of blindness till the client is happily resettled—both economically and socially.

After giving Basic Rehabilitation, the Department assists the client in his further vocational development and thereafter in his happy economic resettlement. In doing so, it may make use of the facilities available in the normal community resources or in the Blind Welfare set up.

Once the client is registered at the Department, he is free to come to the Department again and again at any stage of his life for any guidance or assistance that he may need.

## Objectives of the Department

The Scheme broadly aims at

- (a) creating a machinery—an organizational set-up—which can rehabilitate, train and develop the visually handicapped right from the stage of impairment till the client is happily resettled in life, economically and socially,
- (b) organizing courses for adjusting and rehabilitating individual blind clients right from the onset of blindness till the client is adequately developed and is assisted in earning a remunerative and a living wage,
- (c) starting courses for training Key Professional Personnel required in the field of Rehabilitation,
- (d) developing a training course for Instructors in Mobility, and
- (e) guiding all Institutions for Adult Blind in the country in developing similar projects in their areas so as to spread the concept of Basic Rehabilitation in the country.

The Department will use, free of all costs, the Industrial Rehabilitation facilities available at the NAB-Workshop for the Blind. Setting up of exclusive Rehabilitation Centres for adjusting the newly blind clients or those who have not had the benefit of Rehabilitation Training would be prohibitively costly. It is, therefore, wise to integrate Rehabilitation Training in the existing facilities. This method would be much more economical and would suit the needs of developing countries. This is the only way of rehabilitating a large number of blind clients at the lowest cost and making them productive citizens contributing to the economy of the country.

The objectives of the Department are:

- identification, location and referral of clients,
- giving them adjustment, orientation and mobility training,
- imparting training in personal management, personal grooming, self-care, techniques of daily living, skills of communication, home economics, knowledge of aids and appliances available and developing social graces,
- industrial rehabilitation and planning further vocational training and career development of clients,
- developing short-term and refresher courses in rehabilitation and organizing Seminars, Symposia, etc. with a view to giving publicity,
- organizing the training of various categories of professional staff required in the field of rehabilitation,
- developing courses for training Instructors in Mobility, and
- guiding and assisting all Institutions for adult blind in the country to develop similar programmes of rehabilitation.

## Scheme

The Department intends to train each year four batches of 25 rehabilitees. In addition, the Department trains at each of the four Courses some six to nine professionals in the field of rehabilitation from all over India.



Thus the Professional Instructors, who are drawn from Institutions and Associations for the Blind from all over India, get an opportunity of handling a client load at the very stage of training itself. This gives them practical experience of handling clients and makes their training meaningful. It also helps clients in receiving individual and personalized attention. Their rehabilitation and training programme is tailor-made to suit the individuals' problems, aptitudes, etc. The Rehabilitees as also the Professional Trainees get certificates at the end of the three month's course.

## **Rehabilitation Training**

Rehabilitation Training is imparted in seven sections. They are:

### *Rehabilitation*

It trains clients in Adjustment, Personal Management, Personal Grooming, Self-Care, Techniques of Daily Living; gives Guidance and Counselling and imparts Rehabilitation Training. The section maintains individual files of each client, coordinates work of various sections, conducts inter-disciplinary meetings, evolves tailor-made programmes to suit the needs of each client and generally ensures coordination.

### *Vocational Training and Training in Handicrafts*

Here, the Rehabilitees are introduced to various Handicrafts and Vocations. Their suitability for a vocation to be pursued as a career is evaluated and assessed.

### *Light Engineering Section*

The Rehabilitees are introduced to Mechanical and Electrical Training of an elementary type, working on simple fly presses, hand-operated or mechanically-operated machines, machines such as Punching and Drilling Machines, etc.

### *Braille and Communications*

In addition to training the clients in Braille, their skills at communications are developed. Clients are initiated in Typewriting, Dictaphone Operation, use of the Talking Books, etc. The proper use of available modern aids and appliances is taught.

### *Home Economics*

Here particular attention is paid to Domestic Science and develops clients in normal household duties such as cooking, laundry, cleaning, sewing, home management, etc. For blind females, special emphasis is laid on Home Management and Child Care.

### *Mobility Training*

Every effort is made to fully develop the mobility of blind clients. The use of the White Cane—both indoors and outdoors—is taught.



### *Physical Training and Corrective Therapy*

Great attention is paid to Physical Training. Corrective Therapy is planned in consultation with specialists in the field. The Department hopes to develop a fully fledged indoor Gymnasium.

### *Staffing Pattern*

In addition to a Director and a Deputy Director, the Department of Rehabilitation has specialist staff consisting of a Rehabilitation Officer, two Mobility Instructors, an Instructor in Home Economics and Domestic Science, an Instructor in Communication Skills, an Instructor in Physical Education and Training who also looks after Corrective Therapy needs, a Social Worker and a Vocational Guidance Counsellor. To the above staff, one Mobility Officer for training Instructors in Mobility, two more Mobility Instructors, a Vocational Instructor and an Employment Officer are to be added shortly.

The Project Staff members are specialists in their respective fields. They are chosen with great care. Steps are taken to continuously develop them in their specialities.

### **Inter Disciplinary Team**

The Project Staff constitutes the Inter Disciplinary team which meets twice a week or more often as needed. They discuss the assets and liabilities—the good and the weak points—of each individual client and plan corrective action and further development of the client. Success in client development mainly rests on the efforts of this Specialist Inter Disciplinary team. The team may also avail itself of the services of specialists in particular fields as and when necessary.

The team members attend thirty-six talks given to Professional Trainees by experts in the field of rehabilitation. The Project Staff members also give talks to rehabilitees and the Professional Trainees.

### **Professional Trainees**

In the developing countries, whereas training of Teachers of the Blind has made some progress, training of professional staff required in the field of rehabilitation of the blind has been sadly neglected.

The Department of Rehabilitation organizes four courses a year for training professional staff drawn from Institutions and Associations for the Blind all over India and new recruits interested in taking up Rehabilitation as a career.

Thirty-six talks by experts in various disciplines give the theory input to the trainees. They get practical experience in handling adequate client load. Each Professional trainee is entrusted with the task of totally developing three clients. This ensures personal involvement and rapport and very substantially helps in client development.

### **Merits of the Department of Rehabilitation**

The notable merits of this experiment are that  
— it creates an organizational set up which can rehabilitate and train blind clients right from the stage of onset of blindness till they are happily resettled, economically and socially,

- the clients themselves are fully involved and are motivated,
- the staff endeavours to develop the clients in totality and prepares them to function at their optimum level,
- a variety of options are available and enable a rehabilitee and the expert Inter Disciplinary team to select suitable careers of the client's choice,
- the client receives individual and personalized attention and the plan for his career development is tailor-made to suit his hopes, aspirations and abilities,
- the personal rapport established between the Instructors and the clients restores the confidence of the client and accelerates the pace of his development,
- the Professional Trainees, while receiving intensive training, not only receive theory input but practice experience within the service system,
- the Professional Trainees have ample opportunities of handling a client load, which prepares them for meeting practical and realistic situations throughout their careers in the field of rehabilitation,
- that since the Professional Trainees are drawn from Institutions for the Blind all over the country, the concept of Rehabilitation steadily spreads to the remotest areas,
- that a cadre of core staff—professionally trained—in the field of rehabilitation is being continuously built up in the country,
- the scheme has the merit of integrating staff training with client assesment, training and development,
- the scheme is down to earth, practical, realistic, low cost and high yield and, compared to the benefits, the cost is minimal,
- in terms of human benefits, the gains are immeasurable,
- it is much less expensive to provide rehabilitation and resettle the visually impaired clients than to provide life long care and/or services,
- rehabilitation ensures meaningful integration of the blind in the normal community, and
- this organizational arrangement facilitates improved and assured rehabilitation services.

## MODEL II: DOMICILIARY PROGRAMME

The second model I would like to refer to is the interesting experimental pilot project conducted in the South Indian State of Tamil Nadu (formerly Madras). The Project, developed with aid from the Rehabilitation Services Administration, Department of Health, Education and Welfare, USA has, as its objectives, the development of practical methods for the total rehabilitation of blind persons living in *rural* areas in their own environment by giving them scientific training in their houses or nearby.

The training is given in Orientation, Mobility, Personal Care, House Management, Daily Living Skills, Agricultural Operations, Rural Vocations, Manual Dexterity Skills, Vocational Training, Social Integration Activities and allied subjects.

The objective is also to discover the individual capacity and aptitude of rural clients and to train them to live productive lives in a manner agreeable to them so that they may get relief from dependence on others to the extent possible.

### **Methodology**

The Project selected five community block development areas in and around Madurai City. The total population covered was approximately 500,000. Half of one per cent of this population was estimated to be blind. To facilitate touring in the villages, the field staff members were given cycles. The Project Investigator was given a motor cycle.

### **Financial Aspects**

The programme is very simple in scope. It is limited in vocational or career orientation. It aims at preparing clients for being useful and contributive members of the family unit. The cost factor, however, is most favourable. No land, buildings, costly equipment, farm animals and other institutional facilities are needed. The average cost per client over a three year period is Rs.204 (US \$24 only). In an institutional set up, the cost could be around Rs.7,000 (US \$750 only) per client per annum. Thus, at a very low cost, the programme can give basic Rehabilitation and train a very large number of the rural blind.

### **Staff Training**

The staff of some twenty field workers were given intensive training by a reputed Consultant in Rehabilitation from the American Foundation for Overseas Blind. The Project staff was selected from the rural areas covered by the project.

The training of the field staff included demonstration and practice in orientation and mobility, activities of daily living, counselling and interviewing of clients and class-room instruction. They were also trained in various skills involving the common vocational activities of villagers and of the vocational needs of clients entrusted to their care.

The field staff surveyed the area for identification and location of blind persons. In addition to interviewing the clients and ascertaining their complete particulars, the field staff also contacted the family members of clients and secured their deep involvement in the total development of the client.

The Project has effectively demonstrated a simple and constructive approach to providing practical training to a large number of rural clients within the meagre financial resources available in most developing countries.

### **Merits of the Model**

This method

- avoids isolation of the blind or uprooting them from their villages,
- ensures better integration in the family and the village community,
- helps in retaining the interest of family elders and other family members,

- gains the confidence and support of village leaders, village and district officials dealing with Agriculture, Animal Husbandry, Dairy, Poultry Farming, Village Industries and Rural Crafts,
- assures support of these officers who can help clients under various Government approved Schemes,
- facilitates the social integration of the client and indirectly helps him in his chosen career,
- enables the client, even if he is not fully self sufficient, to substantially assist the family unit by his contribution on jobs to which he can do justice,
- is much more economical than other models and can reach a much larger number of the rural blind, and
- develops trained productive manpower rather than encouraging idle untrained manpower.

### MODEL III: AGRICULTURAL AND RURAL TRAINING—INSTITUTIONAL PROGRAMMES

My third model is again suitable for training and for resettling the rural blind in their familiar rural surroundings. It aims at imparting Basic Rehabilitation. In addition, the rural blind are trained in Agriculture, Horticulture, Floriculture, Pisciculture, Animal Husbandry, Dairy Farming, Poultry Farming, Sheep and Goat Rearing, running of Petty Rural Shops, Rural Crafts and Trades, and in allied farm pursuits.

The training period is advisedly kept at one year so that the trainees go through all the four seasons and learn as much about seasonal farm work as is possible.

The Project does not aim at making an expert Agriculturist out of the blind client. What is attempted is to give him all the Basic Skills which enables him to work on his own farm independently or as a participative member of the family unit.

On completion of the training, the Resettlement Officer takes the client to his village and with the help of village officers and his family elders, helps in resettling him. The Centre provides a small initial capital outlay on resettling the client.

Our experience has led us to two conclusions—firstly, the project should preferably be a part of the community development programme so that the assistance, guidance and cooperation of the block level officers would be forthcoming in ample measure; secondly, it would be preferable to organize such a Centre near an Agricultural School, College or Community farm so that expert guidance and assistance is available at all times.

### Merits of the Model

This model has the following merits:

- the visually handicapped are not uprooted from their familiar rural surroundings,
- they are not planted in towns and cities where accommodation is almost impossible to secure, where mobility presents tremendous difficulties for them and where the cost of living is very high,



- the psychological and emotional disturbances consequent upon separation from families are avoided and
- the client is trained and assisted to become a useful and contributive member of the family unit or to run his own farm or business independently.

#### MODEL IV: REHABILITATING THE AGING BLIND

“Home—Sweet Home—there’s no place like Home” runs a song mother used to sing when I was young. Where joint family systems still obtain and where the aging blind could be cared for in their own homes, there is nothing like it.

If not, Homes for Aging Blind should be homes in the real sense of the word. The aging need our love, affection, esteem and care. They need respect. They need social acceptance.

Homes for the aging blind should endeavour to give all these and to secure for aged blind happiness, approval and acceptance in the community.

A Home for the Aged developed in India provides for past-time occupations—both urban and rural—which keep the aged happily—though lightly—occupied. A great deal of attention is paid to developing recreational activities, outings, talks, variety entertainments, etc. This keeps them cheerful and leaves no time for brooding.

Domiciliary programmes and Day Centres may also be planned where necessary.

This model needs no elaboration.

Without Basic Rehabilitation, the visually handicapped would have to go through the trial and error method—thus wasting a lot of valuable time and making their task much more difficult. It would, therefore, be a wise policy to first adjust them to their new lives of darkness, train them to the fullest extent possible and thereafter to develop them in careers of their choice so that they would be successful in whatever careers or vocations they follow.

Rehabilitation should aim at full adjustment to disability, securing higher standards of living, ensuring full employment, preparing for all round economic and social progress and total development of the client.

#### Need for International Cooperation

According to a recent report of the International Labour Organization, more than a billion people in Africa and Asia will have to wait for about 40 years before their four basic needs for food, housing, health and education are met. The report adds that between 1.7 and 1.5 billion people on the two continents will continue to live in grinding poverty, with malnutrition, disease and squalid surroundings as part of their daily lives.

“Far reaching policy changes, or sizeable international income transfers to the poorest, appear to be needed to meet the four sets of basic needs”, the report adds.

To me, it appears that if we want to develop Basic rehabilitation on an adequate scale in the developing countries, international cooperation



and financial assistance on a massive scale is inescapable. The sooner it is organized, the better.

A recent United Nations study indicates that approximately ten per cent of any population suffers physical, sensorial or mental impairments. In order to care or compensate for the limitations of disabled persons, at least 25 per cent of any community is directly affected by the existence of impairments. These figures are staggering. They pointedly highlight the colossal proportions of the problem.

It is to the advantage of the State, the Community and the economy of the country that a proper organizational set up exists in all countries for the rehabilitation, training and economic and social resettlement of the visually handicapped.

We are living in a world of increasing interdependence of nations—in a world of international cooperation. All Mankind's Concern is Rehabilitation of the Disabled—no matter to which country they belong.

### **Recommendations**

In all humility, and with all the earnestness at my command, I would submit the following recommendations for the consideration of this august General Assembly:

- evolve an International Plan for assisting Basic Rehabilitation of the Blind,
- develop National and State level Plans for providing rehabilitation and training services for the blind,
- draft model Legislation on Rehabilitation which could be considered by various countries,
- create, under the National Voluntary Agency, with counterparts at State levels, an organizational set up to rehabilitate, train, employ and develop the visually handicapped,
- the Regional Committees, in cooperation with the Rehabilitation, Training and Employment Committee of the WCWB, should endeavour to get professional, technical and financial resources needed for furthering collective self reliance and enhancing the creative capacity of the region and assist in developing an organizational set up as envisaged,
- regional model pilot projects and exchange programmes be developed in the field of Rehabilitation with a view to accelerating the exchange of experiences, sharing of knowledge and pooling of resources and capacities,
- a cadre of highly trained professional personnel in the field of Rehabilitation and Mobility be built up by regularly and systematically organizing training and refresher Courses, Seminars, etc.,
- the set up envisaged should build up “referral chains” of specialized institutions in the blind welfare set up and/or in the normal community resources to which clients could be referred to for further specialized training and/or development,
- rehabilitation should aim at reducing the degree of dependency, at increasing productive work, at contributing to the economy of the country, at reduction of costs of dependency and at meaningful social integration,

- for those with residual vision, training programmes be developed using all available Low Vision Aids,
- rehabilitation services be taken to the rural areas and facilities made available for the rehabilitation of rural blind, the blind women, the aged blind and the blind with multiple handicaps,
- recreational facilities and Day Centres be provided to wean away the blind—particularly the aged blind—from their loneliness and isolation and to further the process of their reintegration into the normal community,
- national or regional training centres and training courses for Professional Staff engaged in the field of Rehabilitation of the Blind be established and developed,
- the Rehabilitation, Training and Employment Committee of the WCWB may use its good offices in persuading some of the affluent countries to assist in furthering Rehabilitation Programmes in developing countries,
- provide institutional care and/or domiciliary, geriatric and other services for the aged blind, and
- develop Rehabilitation Engineering suitable to the needs of developing countries using simple, moderate, intermediate and inexpensive technology and make available rehabilitation aids and educational and vocational equipment at economic prices.

It is my submission that the visually handicapped be enabled to enjoy equal opportunities, enjoy all human rights, all fundamental freedoms, peace and happiness, the dignity and worth of the human person and social justice. Then alone would rehabilitation be meaningful and would achieve the objectives we have in mind.

Thank you!

## AFRICA's VILLAGE FARMERS

by Ronald J. Mbekeani, Secretary/Registrar  
Malawi Council for the Handicapped—Malawi

### 1. General

1.1 In the developing countries of Africa where the largest number of the population live in rural communities and where Agriculture plays a dominant role in the rural economy, small scale farming can be undertaken successfully by the blind and the handicapped without the use of sophisticated equipment. In particular those countries where the mainstay of their economies is agriculture, the blind once trained in agriculture have a much brighter future than perhaps being employed in industries that are in their infancy and where the able-bodied are preferred by employers.

1.2 In our communities however, there is the problem of land tenure which is common to all parts of Africa, and is made more acute by a rapidly expanding population and booming economy. This is more evident in those communities where small scale farming is being overtaken by large and mechanized estate farming. It is important, however, not to lose sight of the fact that the blind and the handicapped have equal rights with the sighted to share any available land and facilities. What is more important also is whether or not the blind are equally qualified to make use of these facilities being made available by National Governments, and also share the resources being made available by international agencies or developed countries.

1.3 In most cultures, particularly in East and Central Africa, the blind, the handicapped, the aged and the indigent are well looked after within their extended family systems. They are not shunned or ill-treated in any way, but are accepted with sympathy. However, as a subsistence economy gives way to a cash economy, the blind and the indigent if not adequately prepared become isolated. Some of them in order to support themselves move to rural trading centres or urban areas and engage in begging. Others continue to be cared for in their homes, where their worst enemy is probably boredom and frustration, and neither they nor their families are aware of their capabilities. It is particularly worse in those areas where there are no opportunities for training or education. Here education and training is meant functional education and vocational training with a really good purpose.

1.4 For the blind who are young and in good health, and who may have a family to support and children to educate, farming offers a way of life which will harness their energies, feed their family and provide an income. To their community they become an economic

asset ready to participate and contribute to the national development of their countries.

1.5 Problems of developing a complete service for the blind will be many and complex, but with unique planning and proper imagination a sound scheme can easily be started particularly in those countries where rural agricultural schemes have been started by national governments. It must, however, be borne in mind that reluctance from planners of these rural schemes for blind persons to join the schemes is common, but this can be resolved once it has been shown and proven that the blind can work just as well as the sighted. In fact in some cases there has been more demand for resettlement of blind persons side by side with their sighted counterparts, once it has been proven that they are equally good. Perhaps the experience in Malawi is a good illustration of how the integration of the blind in an agricultural development scheme can successfully be undertaken.

## 2. Malawi experience

### 2.1 *The Take Off of Resettlement and Placement of the Blind in Malawi*

- 2.1.1 In 1967, when the Ministry of Education, in cooperation with the Royal Commonwealth Society for the Blind, launched its Open Education Programme those responsible for the implementation of the scheme felt that there was an urgent need to look into the whole question of the training and placement of the adult blind who would, in future, be joined each year by an increasing number of sighted school leavers.
- 2.1.2 It seemed that as agriculture is the mainstay of the economy and the majority of the population is engaged in this type of work, the answer for the visually handicapped could also lie in this direction.
- 2.1.3 Teaching simple farming techniques to the blind is not difficult. Traditional implements can be used without modification, except for the addition of a yardstick and a measuring line. Besides many of the blind have worked on the land before losing their sight and facilities for the agricultural training of the blind have existed in Malawi for more than 10 years at the Government Rural Vocational Training Centre for the Blind at Mulanje. After a one-year course in general agriculture, the policy was to return the trainees to their villages, and after-care was given by the Principal of the Training Centre in addition to his other duties. Seeds and fertilizers were provided and other help given when needed; for example, food and clothing for the man and his dependants, and grants for building and repairing houses.



- 2.1.4 However, some of the blind had very little or no land of their own, while others had land which was unsuitable because of poor soil, low rainfall, flooding, etc. Some of the blind achieved a reasonable return for their efforts but a high proportion did not. As a result many left their homes and drifted into the towns, to become street beggars.
- 2.1.5 Because of these difficulties, and the problem of providing adequate supervision for men working on their own in widely scattered villages, it was felt that there was a need for the blind to participate in some type of project which offered permanent and profitable employment, and the Government Agricultural Development Projects seemed to be ideally suited for this. In Agriculture the blind can compete on nearly equal terms with the sighted, and at the same time they would be assisting in the development of the country and become useful members of the community.
- 2.1.6 Accordingly, approaches were made to the authorities in charge of the agricultural development schemes, and with the assistance of the Project Manager of the Chikwawa Cotton Development Project (now the Shire Valley Agricultural Development Project hereinafter referred to as CCDP), a pilot scheme was started there in 1970. Many of the blind have their homes in this area and would therefore need no acclimatization to the local conditions. At that time the CCDP covered an area of about 100,000 acres scheduled for rain-fed cotton production. The authorities had sunk boreholes and built crop extraction roads, markets had been set up and credit machinery established for the provision of seed, fertilizers, pesticides, spraying machines etc. for the settlers. Experimental stations were built and agricultural personnel were seconded to the scheme and new personnel recruited.
- 2.1.7 The size of the individual holdings varied from 8-12 acres and it was planned that a sufficient acreage should be cultivated from the time settlers arrived on their holdings so that they immediately produced cash crops and moved away from subsistence farming.
- 2.1.8 In order to overcome any reluctance on authorities regarding the work potential of the blind, two blind men who had previously been trained at Mulanje were in 1969 taken with their sighted wives into a village near the experimental station and Project Headquarters at Ngabu. They were given a complete season's training cycle as they had little or no experience in the growing of cotton. Housing was provided and while in training the men were paid the standard labourer's wage.



- 2.1.9 When authorities were satisfied that the blind could indeed cultivate their land successfully, at the end of the season, July 1970, the blind farmers were allocated holdings within the settlement scheme. Four other blind men and their families were also given holdings, and traditional thatched mud-block houses of the type approved by the management were built for them. Although the sighted settlers are expected to build their own houses when they arrive on the scheme, this was thought to be too time-consuming for the blind and therefore they were given this help to compensate for their handicap.
- 2.1.10 Subsistence allowances were paid to the blind in their first year to enable them to buy food and other necessities as most of the families had no savings to live on while they waited for the first harvest. Farming tools and household equipment were provided by the Royal Commonwealth Society for the Blind. Sighted labour was employed to clear the heavy bush while preparation of the land for cultivation—hoeing, ridging, planting etc.—was done by the blind themselves.
- 2.1.11 General supervision was given by the Principal of the Mulanje Rural Vocational Training Centre for the Blind acting as a Resettlement Officer and a “mthandizi” or leader (a local man with a good farming record) was employed to deal with any day-to-day problems which arose from the settlers’ visual handicap; for example, laying out the plots ready for hoeing, and to act as a liaison person with the agricultural personnel. The mthandizi was given a holding of his own to cultivate. The blind were given access to all the services provided for the sighted—credit facilities, and advice and instruction by the agricultural extension aid. At the end of the crop year, cotton was sold through the ADMARC markets, and loans for insecticides and spraying machines were repaid. Results proved to be comparable to those of the sighted farmers and a further 10 blind farmers were allocated holdings for the 1971/72 season. Financial assistance for these and for another 10 settled in the 1972/73 season was made available by Oxfam. With the total of 26 blind in the scheme it was felt that no more should be settled there for the time being as the proportion of blind to sighted would be too high which is contrary to RCSB’s aim of a balanced society with the blind fully integrated with the sighted and not forming a distinct community of their own.
- 2.1.12 A similar project was started in Salima in 1971 as part of the Central Region Lakeshore Development Project hereafter referred to as CRLDP. Houses were built and

subsistence provided for men and their families. The cost was partly met by a grant from the Malawi Society for the Blind, and from Oxfam. Conditions for the settlers were comparable to those in the Lower Shire Valley but crops grown included maize and groundnuts as well as cotton. A more intensive type of farming was advocated by the authorities in charge of the scheme by the use of fertilizers and by the provision of mechanical clearing once the heavy bush had been removed. Eight more settlers were taken into the scheme in 1972, making a total of 13 blind farmers in the CRLDP.

- 2.1.13 In 1973, 10 holdings were set aside for the blind at Rivi Rivi Agricultural Development Project near Balaka. Crops grown there were cotton, maize, groundnuts and sunflowers and in 1974 10 farmers were settled at Mubangwe Settlement Scheme in the Northern Region.

## 2.2 *Results of the Malawi Experience*

- 2.2.1 From the results obtained it was clear that farming in a resettlement area can be a more successful way of life for the blind than resettlement in their own villages. It has the advantage that large numbers of the blind can be absorbed and fully integrated into a sighted community. The blind have the satisfaction of knowing that they can achieve as much as their sighted colleagues—in some cases they have done even better. Permanent holdings, supervision, after-care, marketing, credit facilities are provided as part of the services for all settlers and do not have to be specially set up for the blind. Projects may change their policies over the years and vary the crops to be grown, but the blind can be quite as adaptable as the sighted. As all these development projects have the full backing of the Government there is no possibility that they will be abandoned, as might be the case with schemes orientated solely towards serving the blind.
- 2.2.2 Many difficulties which occur in the settlement areas are common to both the blind and the sighted—domestic and cultural problems which arise when families are away from their villages and relatives, especially during illness. Experience has shown that the successful establishment of a blind man depends to a large extent on the presence of a sighted wife. She has to help with a great deal of the manual labour on such large holdings, particularly with weeding after the first rains and at harvest time with picking and grading the cotton. If the farmer employs farm hands she is responsible for supervising their work and should report to her husband if there are any shortcomings.

- 2.2.3 It has been found that during harvesting the blind can usually count on the help of their families outside the development projects, and some farmers have full-time help from relatives all the year. It is essential that such helpers are adult and matured.
- 2.2.4 In 1975, the Mangulenje Scheme moved further north near Chikwawa Boma and the blind farmers appear more successful there. The Rivi Rivi Scheme and the Salima Project have taken on more blind farmers. The blind farmers in the Northern Region have made great success in the growing of tobacco.

### 2.3 *Training and Evaluation Farm*

- 2.3.1 A Training and Evaluation Farm is being established with funds from CEBEMO of Netherlands. The general aim of the project is the rehabilitation of the blind bachelors in a Malawian Society, and the generation of income that can be used for the maintenance and creation of activities for the handicapped in Malawi. The object of the project is:
  - (a) To enable blind bachelors to earn a decent living thereby making them more independent from others;
  - (b) Enable blind bachelors to live up to their traditional obligations;
  - (c) To evaluate and train the blind in agriculture;
  - (d) To set up activities on a commercial basis in order to provide a positive educational experience for the blind and to generate income.
- 2.3.2 Some unmarried farmers have also been tried in the projects but it is fair to say that their performance is usually below that of the married men. They are very dependent on their labourers or helpers and often do not control them properly or use them to the best advantage. In some cases, the blind have expected their helpers to do most of the work, and naturally they become dissatisfied and may leave the blind man to fend for himself.
- 2.3.3 The best outlook for young unmarried men in agricultural resettlement may perhaps lie in grouping them together on a commercial farm where they can be employed as labourers until they find a sighted wife. Here their activities can be directed and they are not faced with the responsibility for managing a holding single-handed.

## 3. **Training and Resettlement of a Blind Farmer**

- 3.1 Africa is a big continent and consequently what is done in Malawi cannot be copied step by step in another part of the continent. What is more important though is to observe the

principle of normality in any resettlement of a blind person. Isolation causes enormous problems. Creation of resettlement schemes for the blind person should whenever possible be avoided, and a similar practice as that of open education should be encouraged instead. Here we are talking of integration of a blind farmer with sighted farmers and using all available facilities provided by National Governments to farmers. These are credit facilities, agricultural personnel, inputs, medical facilities etc. Blind farmers or their wives in this system will also be able to join in self-help schemes, women's groups, land allocation committees, farmers' committees etc. Once this is achieved the blind farmer will not only satisfy himself with economic benefits, but also social benefits in the traditional set up of the village or settlement. Organizations of or for the blind will only concern themselves with the initial settlement or problems pertaining to the disablement other than giving advice of the agricultural nature or other aspects that are handled by the general services.

### 3.2 *Training*

In order to achieve this aim special training facilities in rural agricultural areas supported later by a properly worked out resettlement scheme need to be established. National organizations of or for the blind should be involved in this, perhaps working through committees established for the purpose. Training should be as functional as possible geared to farming. Misplaced pity undermines a blind man's ability to work hard. Blind men and their wives must learn to labour arduously for a full working day. Training Centres for the training of blind farmers therefore are an indispensable tool. The Centre should not only provide knowledge in agriculture but also instil in the trainee the spirit of hard work in the field rather than worshipping a qualifying certificate he gets at the end of the course. In Malawi a blind farmer's real qualification is his good performance in the field. Training should not be geared to employment other than resettlement in one's own holding or settlement scheme. Training therefore should aim at the following:

- adjust the blind to his disablement;
- develop a sense of self-reliance, self-confidence and mobility;
- to teach agricultural techniques to enable him to become self-supporting and independent financially in order to become a useful member of the community;
- to make the fullest use of his potential;
- to demonstrate to his family and the community that this can be done, and to engage their full support;
- to be able to demonstrate improved methods of farming.

### 3.3 *Assessment and Selection of Candidates for Training*

Not everyone is suitable for agriculture. Careful selection of candidates for agricultural training and settlement should preferably be in the age range of 20–45 years. Older people are not as



adaptable as younger ones and are slower to learn new techniques. Those below 20 years, may be suitable for training if they are to work with a family, a group or in a cooperative society. Mental alertness and ability to absorb new ideas do improve during training. It is common in developing countries that blind people have been left without much in the way of mental stimulus for years and tend to become slow and sluggish. Throughout training assessment should be made on the suitability of the candidate for agricultural resettlement. The training should also be planned to improve mobility and dexterity. Motivation to work is another good aspect to be considered since if a man is determined to succeed he is likely to surmount his handicap. Pressure would not produce good results. It is important not to pressurize the blind person into joining settlement schemes if he is not interested. The half-hearted blind may in time change their minds later and accept to join the scheme once they learn that their colleagues are doing well. The family also plays a leading role in training and must be willing for their blind person to be trained. It will be difficult for the blind persons if they are opposed to the idea, and their co-operation will be needed when the training course is over and when they are farming on their own land.

### 3.4 *After-Care and Resettlement*

This is just as important as the training, and if not properly carried out will nullify the benefits of the Course. After-care and resettlement should be looked at during the initial period in the field as an on the spot training. Good relationship, therefore between the Centre, resettlement and agriculture personnel must be continued. In order to make it a success large scale planning is necessary and should include the following:

- (a) Programme should not be restrictive and must work towards a variety of placement projects including resettlement in one's own village if land is available, and working on an established farm, in a cooperative society or with a family, in particular the young and unmarried blind people;
- (b) In a country with an agricultural economy, the majority of the projects must be of an agricultural nature;
- (c) Continuation of training in the field should be well coordinated and geared towards the kind of farming available in the area. This may be carried out on the holding or commercial farm of the organization where the farmer will work;
- (d) The organization should be capable of moving in with assistance during the peak periods to relieve hard-working farmers who have fallen back due to illness or been overtaken by events beyond their control;

- (e) Full cooperation with agricultural Extension Social Welfare, Community Development, Health and Education personnel is essential and vital;
- (f) The home management courses should also be organized for wives geared to making wives understand their husbands better. These courses may be organized in cooperation with courses run by the general services;
- (g) If craft work is done at home, encouragement should be made for marketing the produce, but careful attention should be made to avoid concentration on non-profitable operations;
- (h) Progressive settlement schemes do train the farmer to raise cash crops. If the farmer has his own holding, it must be an economic holding to enable him to grow cash crops as well as maintaining a subsistence garden;
- (i) To avoid the evolution of blind communities, blind farmers should be integrated with sighted farmers because blind families who live together do not make for efficient farming and the maintenance of high standards. Furthermore, they hinder the full integration of the blind with society at large;
- (j) Resettlement Schemes must be built into the Programme as an effective measure of after-care or supervised services;
- (k) Commercial enterprises, including farming enterprises, have frequently been seen to be successful where both the blind and sighted labour are integrated. Such units must be organized on a commercial basis;
- (l) Community leaders, family or relations must be made aware of the role they can each play in helping the blind re-establish himself. They should not give too much help and sympathy so that the man loses the urge to work and his self-reliance; or too little help when needed, so that he feels overwhelmed and falls back into his old ways;
- (m) Importance of cash crop should be stressed; and
- (n) Regular visits by Resettlement personnel must be maintained so that cultivation does not get out of control. This is particularly important at planning time; after the first rains; during weeding and harvesting.

#### 4. Conclusion

Malawi as seen from this paper has successfully pioneered in the resettlement of the blind farmers. No doubt this is why the scheme has attracted international recognition. If it is deemed necessary or appropriate by this conference, the WCWB is prepared to organize a Workshop or Seminar in Malawi. Such a proposal would no doubt be considered by the Malawi Government.

## **ROLE OF SPECIAL ENTERPRISES IN SOLVING PROBLEMS OF SOCIAL AND VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION OF THE BLIND**

by Vassili A. Fedorenko, Vice-President  
All-Russia Association of the Blind

In achieving social rehabilitation and integration, employment of the blind was and is one of the most critical problems of the present for the overwhelming majority of countries. In this century of impetuous social, scientific and technical progress many problems, and among them the various problems concerning the blind, for the first time in history got a real basis to be solved rapidly and successfully. One of such problems is the versatile problem of social and labour rehabilitation. Life has proved that the social potential of each country, regard of the society for invalids in particular, development of the system of social security depend not only on the economic level but also on the type of public relations, on the moral and legal rules and their influence upon all the aspects of life and development of the society. The experience of the Soviet Union, socialist and some other states is the best example of this.

The USSR system of rehabilitation of invalids includes various sections of State, scientific, medical, training, production and public organizations. An important role in the field of social and labour rehabilitation and integration of the blind belongs to the All-Russia Association of the Blind. Its experience in solving problems on social rehabilitation and employment is indicative of the fact that the Association is a model of both successful solution of objective requirements of contemporary society and of subjective interests of the blind. This is explained by the fact that on the one hand the Association has real rights and ample opportunities to develop its own organizational structure and material and technical basis and on the other hand it pursues an invariable course of conceivable strengthening its relations with State, scientific and other organizations in solving concrete problems on prophylaxis, rehabilitation and education.

The following trends in work are the attributes of the Soviet system or model of social and labour rehabilitation:

1. Common rehabilitation.
2. Vocational training at training and production centres of the All-Russia Association of the Blind.
3. Rational and qualitative employment.
4. Improvement of professional skill, mastering a second (contiguous) trade.

The possibility to get a secondary or higher education, political, moral or aesthetic education, and social activities as well are attributed

to the versatile social rehabilitation of the blind. The deep interest of the Soviet State in the social activity of each citizen, in social significance of each one, in feasible participation of all members of the society in labour makes it possible to solve successfully the problems of mass integration of the blind.

In the early sixties the problem of employment of the blind was accomplished. At present our conditions provide an opportunity for each blind person to get a job at any time at an enterprise of the Association as well as at state plants or factories, collective or state farms.

In the Russian Federation alone in 1978 the number of blind workers in State industry amounted to 13,000 people, in agriculture—to 6,000 people, in the field of science, culture, education and management—to about 5,000 people. At the same time the enterprises and institutions of the Association numbered 58,000 people. Just a simple comparison of the figures confirms the very objective fact that the training and production centres of the Association present the best form to employ the blind in industry, hence it follows that the subjective aim of the blind is to work at these centres.

The very name of training and production centre reflects the very essence of the rehabilitation system. This centre is a fully-fledged and a full and equal social unit, connected with the Association and also with State and other organizations. Being quite special, a training and production centre does everything possible to adapt its activities to the specific requirements in production and labour organization of the blind. At present we are implementing a programme on rational and qualitative employment. This programme includes production and engineering, medical, sanitary and hygienic, organizational, aesthetic measures, based on the scientific labour organization principles, worked out with very deep thought. These measures guarantee complete safety of labour to each blind person, the character of the job corresponding strictly to the individual recommendations of the State Medical and Labour Commissions of Experts.

When in State industry, the blind are scattered and in the best possible case they work in small groups, thus impeding provision of special working conditions. At the same time these plants and factories do not have special services to see to strict observation of the recommendations of ophthalmologists and typhlogists, which is typical of the enterprises of the Association.

Now I would like to outline the training and production centres for the blind.

At the present time in the USSR there are 443 training and production centres of the Associations of the Blind of the Union Republics, numbering 110,000 blind workers, 194 training and production centres among them belong to the All-Russia Association of the Blind, numbering 58,000 blind workers.

As has been mentioned the main task of the training and production centres consists in providing the blind with proper production, sanitary and hygienic conditions (meeting thus the requirements of rational employment) and with cultural and welfare facilities as well.



Within the recent time much has been done to make the training and production centres more specialized and bigger, the number of them is therefore reducing annually while the total number of the staff at an enterprise is increasing. This permits concentration on the material and financial resources to create bigger complexes, including buildings for production and cultural purposes, dwelling-houses, it permits as well to concentrate the engineering services, to use more effectively the process equipment and to manufacture technically more complicated items to satisfy the needs of the national economy of the country.

Together with the blind working at the enterprise are those who can see, but according to the law in force their number should not exceed 50 per cent of the total staff.

What are the people who can see doing at a training and production centre?

First they belong to the engineering staff (technologists, designers, economists and other office workers) who are directly dealing with organization of production, its planning, material and technical provision; only those who can see perform technological operations, which cannot be done by the blind because of danger, some detrimental effect or because a visual control is required; and finally those who can see perform auxiliary operations: they are fitters on tool manufacture, repair of equipment, adjustment of machine tools, loaders etc.

Just because among the workers of the training and production centres there are those who can see it is possible to introduce up-to-date technology and to manufacture complicated items.

Quite a number of typhological means are used at the training and production centres. These means include non-standard equipment, a variety of technological equipment (dies, moulds, jigs, gauges, measuring instruments and other devices) and are used for labour organization of the blind.

A special Designing Bureau of the Association as well as those workers of the enterprise who can see are dealing with the designing and manufacture of the above-mentioned equipment.

Wide application of typhological engineering permits to use in the basic production process some 60 to 75 per cent of blind workers out of the total number of workers, the blind workers performing various technological operations. The following machine tools are becoming accessible for the blind: lathe, milling machine, jig machine, thread-cutting lathe, various power, pneumatic, hydraulic presses, plastic casting machine. The blind are becoming adapted to many assembly operations.

But prior to admitting the blind to work, they have to undergo training according to a special syllabus, the volume, essence and system of the training corresponding to this syllabus.

The chief engineer of the enterprise and the deputy engineer on social rehabilitation are guiding the training at the enterprise. A trade is chosen in accordance with the desire and abilities of the person, his health and recommendations of the State Medical and Labour Commission of Experts. The training itself is conducted by the engineering staff and by highly skilled workers. The training period depends on the

trade chosen and lasts from three to six months. Within this period of time the apprentices learn to orientate themselves without any assistance on the territory and in the rooms of the enterprise, they study the design of the equipment, safety rules, the technological process of the enterprise, obtain basic working methods and strong habits of work without assistance. While studying the apprentice gets from the enterprise a stipend, the overalls are supplied by the enterprise free of charge.

After completing the training and passing the required examinations the apprentice is given a qualification and an appropriate category. Besides just the training the enterprise provides an improvement course to expand the theoretical knowledge, to study new equipment and technological process, to obtain knowledge in economics of production and to learn second (contiguous) skills. This improvement course is carried out without discontinuing work, its periods and procedures are fixed by the administration of the enterprise in accordance with approved programmes.

Prior to vocational training at the enterprise the blind adults pass a course of common rehabilitation at special centres. The blind children pass this course at boarding schools for blind children and for children with residual vision.

The availability of special technical services, dealing with problems on various aspects of production, on division of complicated technological processes into simpler ones, development of entirely new technological processes for the blind, wide application of production typhology means and partial employment (for technological operations) of those who can see permit the enterprise to manufacture complicated items: electric motors, reducing transformers, low voltage equipment, illuminating equipment, electrical equipment, wire bundles, units and parts for automobiles, tractors and agricultural machines.

The manufacture of these items is included in the plan of national economy, required material and market being provided.

Many enterprises exercise direct cooperation with State plants, manufacturing for them quite a number of items (the materials being supplied by the plants): a variety of units and parts for TV and radio sets, for telephone equipment, including complicated printed circuit cards. A card like that is designed for several hundreds of various radio elements (diodes, resistors, capacitors etc.), which are strictly mounted in given places.

A few enterprises produce bristle and brush items for everyday life and technical purposes, paper and cardboard items, knitted goods.

Not only the workshops of the enterprises are open to the blind, the Association takes care of home-workers as well, this type of rational employment is meant for people not just blind but multiply handicapped as well. At the present time the All-Russia Association of the Blind alone numbers 10,000 home-workers, while the total figure for the USSR is 21,000.

The work at home is quite varied: knitting of shopping bags, using cotton yarn, kapron and vinyl chloride fibre.

Many enterprises, manufacturing electrical appliances and low voltage equipment provide simple work (assembling of simple units)

for the home-workers. The enterprise supplies the home-workers with the required tools and devices, brings the raw material and takes the ready products.

The Special Designing Bureau of the Association renders the enterprises considerable assistance in choosing new items for manufacture and in production organization. By the orders of the enterprises the Bureau provides them with drawings for the technological equipment, non-standard equipment and technological process; the Bureau studies the scientific and technical achievements in other countries and makes recommendations on their use at the enterprises of the Association. The Special Designing Bureau conducts scientific-research work and experimental work on designing typhological means to compensate blindness and residual vision, it also publishes technical information and methodical literature on training.

The existing material and technical basis of the enterprises was forming gradually. The government grants the enterprises for the blind a privilege in paying taxes. Up to 1951 the State used to pay those expenses of the Association of the Blind which the latter failed to pay. Further on, due to the development and improvement of the production, due to considerable increase in manufacture all the enterprises became profitable.

Since 1951 the income of the Association permits to completely clear the charges for construction of production buildings, cultural and welfare facilities, dwelling-houses, for buying equipment and means of transportation, for mass cultural and sports events, for arranging recreation and medical treatment of the members of the Association.

The salary of the blind workers at the enterprises of the Association corresponds to that of those who can see and who have the same qualification and trade, while working in common industry. The salary of the engineering staff is adequate to that of the engineering staff of State industry.

The enterprises work under the direct leadership of the local (regional) Boards of the Association. They are dealing with employment of the blind within a region, with improvement of the conditions, this being done through the local authorities, and finally they provide the fulfilment of the fixed plan by the subordinated enterprises.

The Central Board is guiding all the activities of the Association of the Blind.

The Central Board develops annual and perspective plans of social and economic development, approves the budget of the Association, distributes material and financial resources, exercises control over the activities of the Local Boards and enterprises. The Central Board represents the Association in Governmental organs, participates in development of legislative acts, concerning blind citizens.

The above-mentioned gives us a right to state, that the training and production enterprises of the USSR Associations of the Blind are not closed enterprises for blind people, but special enterprises where wide application of the labour of the blind goes reasonably with that of those who can see, the employed equipment and technological basis permit effective and safe production of quite a variety of items.

In conditions of scientific and technical progress the attention of the National Associations of the Blind and of the World Council for the Welfare of the Blind to problems of social and labour rehabilitation is continually growing. This is only natural since proper solution of these problems provides employment and mass integration of the blind. And this can be realized only when the society understands the needs of the blind, when the society renders assistance and cooperates with the national organizations of the blind and for the blind.

The experience of the Soviet Union is an example of such an understanding and cooperation.



# THE CHALLENGE OF URBAN UNEMPLOYMENT OF THE BLIND

by N. Lorenzo Navarro, Mexico

## I. Introduction

The problem of the unemployment of the blind in the urban areas of developing countries is dramatic and difficult to solve for the following reasons:

1. Lack of education
2. Shortage of jobs
3. Abundance of manpower
4. Limited budgets
5. Failure to recognize the working potential of the blind
6. Limited means of rehabilitation
7. Lack of local initiative, and
8. Refusal of the employer.

We know that employment of the blind is a difficult problem and to some extent not well understood in our countries, because in most instances we talk about education, a little about rehabilitation and almost never about the professional possibilities of the blind.

Many blind people complain bitterly about the objections raised by those who could offer them work and remain indifferent to their eagerness to work in open employment.

Two questions can be posed:

Is it the blind person's lack of qualifications which prevent him from finding employment?

Or is it society and its preconceived ideas about the blind and blindness which limit his professional activities?

If it is true that the lack of qualifications and personality of the blind person are the motives for refusal, the experts and specialists in rehabilitation should unite their efforts so as to attain the principal objective of rehabilitation of the blind: their employment.

If it is true that society rejects and discriminates against their employment, measures should be taken to make society aware of the problem.

## II. Aims

The ultimate aim of training is employment. If this objective is not attained, all the human and material resources employed in the process of rehabilitation will be of no avail.

## III. Open Employment

In order to place the blind in employment in the urban areas of developing countries, better rehabilitation and vocational training should be available; the public should also be fully informed, especially industrialists, businessmen and public services.

In order to combat unemployment in the urban areas, the following aims should be set:

(a) Remove false conceptions held by people about the blind, through all the media at our disposal.

(b) Organize a well-planned information campaign on the working potential of the blind.

(c) Bring about a change in the structure and mentality of institutions for the blind.

(d) Develop vocational training opportunities where they have been overlooked.

(e) Make use of community resources.

(f) Make surveys of new job possibilities for the blind.

(g) Make analyses of jobs.

(h) Organize seminars in order to inform employers of the efficiency of the blind in repetition work and in specific professions.

(i) Make a selection of posts in governmental, federal, municipal or state departments.

(j) Create new sources of sheltered employment.

(k) Increase technical assistance.

When the blind are better prepared physically, psycho-socially and professionally, and the community is aware of their problems, it will be easier for them to find employment.

Open employment is a challenge and gives more satisfaction to the blind person than sheltered work, as this kind of activity gives him a sense of self-achievement and he does not have to depend on anyone else, only on his own efforts and personal capacity.

The integration of the blind person in society is an essential element of rehabilitation, which is why open employment is better than sheltered work.

When considering open employment in developing countries, it should be realized that opportunities are very limited; consequently every opportunity grasped should be a success, in order to prove to sceptical people that the blind person is capable of coping as well, or even better, than any other worker in the firm.

In countries like ours, where the majority of the blind are very poorly educated or not at all, we are obliged to resort to easy jobs, or simple repetition work. Furthermore, if we take into account that our technical training possibilities do not enable us to equip the blind with higher qualifications, it is difficult to find them better jobs.

### *Employment and Follow-up of the blind in the various urban areas of developing countries*

The selection of a blind person for a post in open industry on a trial basis rests with the technical team of the vocational training centre.

## *Analysis of Jobs*

Previous to employment the posts are analysed by the Department to find out those which can be held by a blind person.

The blind person who has been considered capable of taking up an industrial post is sent to the corresponding Department where he receives specific training; he will also be given mobility training both indoors and outdoors, in order to ensure his complete adaptation.

When requesting a job for a blind person, one should first of all take the opportunity to give a clear indication of the blind person's capabilities, so that the employer will treat the matter as if it were a business affair and not as an act of charity.

Despite the problem of urban unemployment in Mexico, some success has been obtained in the following industrial sectors and in the public services: electronics and electro-motor industries, the gas and electricity sector, pharmaceutical chemistry, metallurgy, the food trade in general, offices, perfumery and cosmetic industry, hospitals, sports centres, commercial activities, etc.

## *Dark Room*

Blind people are the obvious candidates for work in dark rooms of hospitals and public or private clinics. This is an area which can be exploited in developing countries.

For the training of the blind as dark room operators, all that is needed is a hospital with an X-ray section, above all with automatic equipment, which the blind person will become familiar with.

For this kind of work, blind people who have had basic rehabilitation training should be selected.

During the past ten years, an average of 500 blind people in Mexico have been placed in open employment in urban areas, and they satisfy the minimum requirements for the jobs they have been given.

## *Specific Vocational Training Services*

The possibility of vocational training of the blind in urban areas should be increased to include telephone operators-receptionists, physiotherapists, computer programmers, insurance agents, medical visitors, sales agents, kiosk tenders, dark room operators, etc., so as to extend job opportunities.

## **IV. Sheltered Workshops for the Blind**

We must admit that sheltered employment for the blind is another solution which we must adopt in order to solve, at least partially, the problem of employment of the blind, and to combat the widespread unemployment in the urban areas of developing countries.

Sheltered workshops mainly operate in two ways:

- by manufacturing their own products
- by fulfilling contracts with other industries.

Sheltered workshop management includes financing and production control.

## **V. The Fight against Urban Unemployment**

Urban unemployment in developing countries is widespread and its solution by the public authorities is almost impossible, as most of the governments have limited budgets. In addition, the political instability of many of these countries and the periodical changes of regime result in programmes and projects not being fulfilled.

Consequently, it is necessary to encourage private initiative so that it can help more in solving the problem of the blind in the developing countries.

Furthermore, international organizations for the blind should give more support to national and private institutions in these countries, in order to find ways of alleviating the grave problem of urban unemployment of the blind.

## **VI. Legislation concerning Employment in Urban Areas**

Legislation in better support of the professional aims of the blind would contribute to the creation of open employment and would result in less opposition on the part of employers who, even when they are aware that certain posts can be entrusted to blind people, often find excuses not to employ them, thus by their attitude increasing unemployment in the urban areas of developing countries.

## **VII. Recommendations**

In Mexico, as in other developing countries, vocational training, which is the final stage in the complete rehabilitation process, is not carried out in a coordinated way. In most of the countries, rehabilitation is limited to BASIC REHABILITATION, the phases of vocational rehabilitation and employment being ignored or forgotten.

To realize that all the efforts, time and money spent on the training of a blind person will not suffice to integrate him into employment, represents failure for him and for the people who have been concerned with his rehabilitation.

In many developing countries efforts have been made to offer employment to the blind; however, in most cases, failures have been more numerous than successes due to the lack of planning, bureaucracy and limited budgets.

But what is the true situation? We are making mistakes, for under these conditions the blind person cannot get rid of his frustrations; on the contrary, they become more deeply rooted when he realizes that rehabilitation is of no use to him and that his efforts to demonstrate his capacities and talents, in order to become integrated in the community, are in vain.

## **VIII. Concrete Suggestions**

1. The creation, on the national level, of responsible organizations for the training and placement of the blind is a logical way to fight for the employment of the blind.

2. The creation of job opportunities and the understanding of employers and businessmen are necessary to obtain work for the blind.



3. The creation of training and professional evaluation centres is indispensable in order to procure employment for the blind as workers in easy repetition jobs, dark room operators in hospitals and private clinics, physiotherapists, telephone operators, receptionists in public and private enterprises, insurance agents, medical visitors, computer programmers, etc.

4. The employment agencies for the blind must be able to rely upon experts for studies and discovery of new labour markets, i.e. engineers, industrial technicians, psychologists, specialists in marketing, instructors in orientation and mobility, social workers, job promoters.

It is true that we belong to the developing countries!

It is true that there are not enough jobs and that we have a surplus of manpower!

It is also a fact that our financial means are limited!

But it is also true that we must work towards employment of the blind in developing countries!

I see no reason to minimize these great truths; I only know that a solution must be found for each country, otherwise we shall be frustrated in our hopes for complete rehabilitation.

## ILO STATEMENT

by Mr. Karl Gunther

In representing the International Labour Office at this Assembly, I bring you the greetings and best wishes of my organization for a successful conference.

As many of you know, within the range of services by United Nations agencies to disabled persons, the International Labour Office, the ILO, carried primary responsibility for all aspects of vocational rehabilitation, training and employment of handicapped persons. The provision of such worldwide services has always been a joint endeavour with other organizations, an effort of cooperation, as is the theme of this assembly. It builds on the unique feature of the ILO among world organizations in that workers' and employers' representatives take part in its work on equal status with representatives of governments; ILO services to disabled persons have thus been steadily developed in close collaboration, with not only other international agencies and governments, but with many non-governmental and voluntary organizations. This is so for the entire vocational rehabilitation programme which exists for all categories of disabled persons; and it is strongly the case in the particular work on behalf of the blind and visually handicapped.

The World Council for the Welfare of the Blind has been a key source of cooperation in this, and we fully appreciate the steady partnership. We look forward to maintaining and deepening this collaboration in the future.

In the last two decades, more than 80 developing countries have drawn directly on ILO technical cooperation for the purpose of establishing new services for the disabled or expanding existing services. Such projects, which can include the provision of advisory services of rehabilitation experts, as well as other forms of direct assistance, always include the organization and development of services to the blind. Some projects have been designed exclusively on behalf of blind and visually handicapped persons.

The ILO fellowship programme has helped rehabilitation workers from developing countries to receive specialized training abroad. Some ILO fellowships have enabled blind persons to attend professional international meetings. ILO seminars, such as the ILO/DANIDA Seminar on the Vocational Rehabilitation of the Blind and the Deaf, which was held in Hong Kong three years ago, focus on the specific problems of certain regions. Most recently, steps are being taken to associate an ILO vocational rehabilitation adviser with the large project in the West African region affected by onchocerciasis. The ILO has given special attention to the problem of gathering and disseminating technical information on blind programmes throughout the world.

As many of you know, since 1974 the ILO's Vocational Rehabilitation Section has been providing a special documentation service, BLINDOC.

It has been developed in collaboration with WCWB and with the help of many of its member organizations. The main objective of the service is to keep blind organizations and rehabilitation specialists throughout the world abreast of new developments and techniques associated with vocational guidance, assessment, training, and employment of the blind in open and sheltered employment. By August 1979, over 320 reports and abstracts have been distributed to about 500 blind organizations and rehabilitation staff around the globe.

While the central focus of the service is upon integration or re-integration in productive work, gainful employment or self-employment, there is also a strong concern with rehabilitation for self-care and self-supporting activities in family and community. Programmes for the blind in rural regions are of special interest; at the same time, the documentation must reflect the integration of the blind in future-oriented occupations of technically advanced societies.

Nevertheless, much more needs to be done to develop fair and effective opportunities of training and working for blind persons everywhere; and more must be accomplished in organizing international documentation and information exchange.

The ILO will continue to do everything in its power to strengthen relevant documentation and information services, as well as other forms of international assistance. Any cooperation from blind organizations and centres anywhere through expanded data input, the building up of a common language of indexing terms, help with the translation of document analyses into other international languages are but examples of specific technical areas in which we can all work together. There is a need to share much more effectively the experience with new technical aids; and a fuller knowledge of the laws and administrative practices of regulations, etc. that around the world apply to the rehabilitation and employment of the blind and visually handicapped must be built up.

In reference thereto, and in conclusion, I mention the Resolution concerning disabled persons which was adopted just recently by the 1979 General Conference of the International Labour Organization. It calls, among others, upon the Office to mark the 1981 International Year of the Disabled by gathering documentation on legislation and research in the area of social integration and vocational rehabilitation in member countries.

In working to fulfil this charge, we shall certainly include special attention to the situation of the blind. A large majority of the world's estimated forty million blind are still denied the opportunity of contributing to their own and their country's well-being.

We in the ILO want to continue cooperating with all of you toward the time when blind youths and adults alike can take their full place in the community and the world of work.

## PROFESSIONAL SESSION 9

### CULTURAL COOPERATION

Tuesday afternoon, August 7, 1979

Chairman: Mrs. Dorina de Gouvêa Nowill, Brazil

#### REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON CULTURAL AFFAIRS

by Dorina de Gouvêa Nowill, Chairman

From 1974 to 1976, the Chairman of the Committee on Cultural Affairs was Mr. Eric T. Boulter, who established an excellent rapport with UNESCO and paved the way to the Draft Protocol to the Florence Agreement. The Draft Protocol concerns the duty-free importation of equipment and all types of materials for use by the blind and visually handicapped. During the 34th General Conference of the UNESCO in Nairobi in November 1976 the Draft Protocol was approved.

This unforgettable achievement of Mr. Boulter's was and is typical of all the rest of his career as a leader in international endeavours for the advancement of the blind and visually handicapped.

The term of the Chairwoman of the Committee on Cultural Affairs began in Helsinki in 1976, during a meeting of the Honorary Officers.

Returning from Helsinki to Brazil, the Chairwoman stopped over in Paris. There she was honored to have an interview with the Deputy Director-General of UNESCO, Mr. John Ev. Fobes, and was able to speak with him about the WCWB and its aims and those of the CCA. Contacts were made with members of the permanent Brazilian Delegation at UNESCO and with Dr. Marie-Claude Dock, Director of the UNESCO Division of Copyright.

The Chairwoman faced two duties: the organization of the CCA itself and the broaching of the copyright problem.

Continuous, active, and able work by these groups together with WCWB/CCA led to the WCWB's incorporation into the Inter-governmental Copyright Committee as a permanent observer.

Permanent observer status at IGC was such an important step for all who work with the blind and visually handicapped that the Chairwoman of CCA thinks it fitting to thank a few of the many who contributed to our effort with that of their own, before going further with the report:

- Mr. Boris Zimin, President of the WCWB
- Mr. Anders Arnör, Honorary Secretary-General
- Honorary Officers



Members of the Committee on Cultural Affairs  
Chairmen and Members of the Sub-Committees and Heads of  
Information Centers

- Permanent Delegation of Brazil at UNESCO  
Ambassador Geraldo Holanda Cavalcanti, Head of Delegation  
Minister Joaquim Ignacio MacDowell  
Mr. Isnard de Freitas, Delegation Advisor  
Ambassador Paulo E. de Berrêdo Carneiro
- Minister of Foreign Affairs of Brazil  
Dr. Antonio Francisco Azeredo da Silveira
- Counselor Francisco Soares Alvim Neto  
Second Secretary, Division of Intellectual Cooperation  
Brazilian Ministry of Foreign Affairs
- Dr. Marie-Claude Dock, Director  
The Copyright Division of UNESCO
- Secretary of Culture, Science, and Technology for the State of  
São Paulo  
Dr. Max Feffer
- Dr. Horácio Coimbra  
President of Companhia Cacique de Café Solúvel, São Paulo and  
Counselor to the Fundação para o Livro do Cego no Brasil  
(Foundation for the Book of the Blind in Brazil)
- The Directors, Staff, Workers, and Counselors of the Fundação  
para o Livro do Cego no Brasil

At the Twelfth Session (4th extraordinary) of the Executive Committee of the World Intellectual Property Organization and 2nd Session of the Intergovernmental Copyright Committee, meeting jointly in Paris at UNESCO, November 28–December 6, 1977, the Brazilian delegate, Minister Joaquim Ignacio MacDowell presented a request from the WCWB to be admitted by the IGC to its sessions as a permanent observer (document IGC(1971)/II/2). The Council's observer, chairwoman of the CCA, gave details of the WCWB's structure, activities, and objectives, and its status at UNESCO, the United Nations, UNICEF, WHO, ILO, CWOIH, and the IAPB. The Council's request for admission, supported by the Brazilian delegate, was approved unanimously.

The Brazilian delegate then presented a second proposal on Item 17 of the Agenda, the Application of the Berne Convention and of the Universal Copyright Convention to equipment specially designed for the blind, as to the setting up of a Working Group (document B/EC/XII/16—IGC(1971)/II/19). The CCA observer suggested that this Working Group be set up under the aegis of the Committees, whose task would be to study suitable ways and means of facilitating the free flow of books and publications designed for the blind and visually handicapped.

Upon the unanimous approval of this second proposal, paragraph 179, document IGC(1971)/II/20 was settled upon:

179. The *Committees*, at the suggestion of the Chairman, then decided to appoint WCWB, and if necessary other international organizations dealing with those suffering from auditory handicaps, to carry out a preliminary study for the Secretariats. That study would be supplemented by a brief account of the solutions which had emerged at the national level, and would be submitted, if the Secretariats considered it necessary, to a working group consisting of representatives of non-governmental organizations concerned. The outcome of those consultations would be made known at the next sessions of the Committees in 1979.

The unanimous approval of the Brazilian proposals by the Secretariats of the IGC and of WIPO and by member delegates was most gratifying, and the request by the observers of the international organizations of publishers, authors, and artists to be included in the Working Group was equally promising.

As requested, the CCA prepared its study on the present situation and conditions for the obtaining of copyrights for material in raised characters, recorded form, and large type for the blind and visually handicapped. To do this, a questionnaire was sent to all member countries of the WCWB. Twenty-five answered and the results and complete studies were forwarded to the Secretariats of IGC and WIPO. To carry on with this work, the WCWB was invited to be represented at the IGC 3rd ordinary session at the Headquarters of WIPO in Geneva, February 5-9, 1979.

To carry out such tasks and others the Standing Technical Committee on Cultural Affairs created seven sub-committees. The following tells of their organization, function and activities. The unification of braille codes, media, computerization, mechanical large type production and distribution, the reprint of *World Braille Usage* and the publication of *Braille: A Medium of Communication for the Visually Handicapped* were subjects and results of these five years of work and study.

## THE STANDING TECHNICAL COMMITTEE ON CULTURAL AFFAIRS AND ITS SEVEN SUB-COMMITTEES

By-Law V of the WCWB Constitution, Article VII, Section 2, approved by the Executive Committee during its meeting in Riyadh, on March 2, 1977, created the standing technical committees among them the Committee on Cultural Affairs. To give members and highly qualified non-member professionals means to work toward CCA goals, seven sub-committees were set up. Each sub-committee should hold at least one meeting by August 1979.

The purposes and function of the CCA and each of its sub-committees, the chairmen and members of each, as well as their activities are given in this report to provide an easy point of reference for those needing information about our activity in the past two years.

## Purposes and Function of the Committee on Cultural Affairs

*Purposes* — The purpose of the Committee on Cultural Affairs (CCA) shall be the unification of braille alphabets and symbols and the development of braille and talking book programs and publications in braille and other media for the blind and adult education for the blind.

*Function* — To achieve its aims the Committee shall work to:

- (a) continue the updating of the Committee on Cultural Affairs;
- (b) create and organize sub-committees;
- (c) maintain contacts with and obtain UNESCO's cooperation for the development of programs;
- (d) organize and follow up the question of copyright regulations for the production of braille books, talking books, and large type books;
- (e) program international exchange of information in the production and distribution of publications for the blind and visually handicapped;
- (f) make in-depth studies of the existing resources of talking books;
- (g) make in-depth and thorough studies of braille mathematics, and science symbols;
- (h) examine carefully and follow up the situation of braille music codes and the possibility of their unification;
- (i) re-examine the existing braille linguistic codes;
- (j) delve into and follow up the situation of the production and distribution of braille and large type books and other media for the blind and the visually handicapped;
- (k) take other measures deemed necessary to achieve the purposes of the committee.

*Chairwoman:* Mrs. Dorina de Gouvêa Nowill — United Kingdom

*Members:* Mr. Eric T. Boulter — United Kingdom

Ms. Ludmilla Solntseva — USSR

Ms. Jeanne Kenmore — USA

Mr. Rajendra T. Vyas — India

Mr. Kiichi Higo — Japan

## THE SUB-COMMITTEES

*Composition* — Each sub-committee is composed of one chairman, and at least three members. Seats are not allocated only on the basis of satisfying national or regional aspirations but on the basis of the member being a professional with thorough knowledge of the area of study to which he or she has been appointed.

*General Purposes* — To achieve its aims each sub-committee should:

- (a) maintain a Coordination and Information Center to receive and distribute information;
- (b) maintain contacts and obtain national and international co-operation for the development of programs;

- (c) stimulate the organization of study groups according to each specific area;
- (d) promote meetings of the members;
- (e) organize a roll of experts and keep it up to date.

### **Sub-Committee on Braille Linguistic Codes**

Coordination and Information Center: P.O. Box 5504  
Johannesburg 2000  
South Africa

<i>Chairman:</i>	Mr. Walter Cohen	— South Africa
<i>Members:</i>	Mr. Kiichi Higo	— Japan
	Mr. David Lopez	— Argentina
	Mr. Abdulrahman Al-Khalaf	— Saudi Arabia

This sub-committee reports that as countries are changing their boundaries and names it is sometimes difficult to determine where one should inquire regarding braille systems and for systems for individual dialects. The question, when does a dialect become a language, is asked. For these reasons the sub-committee plans to continue to explore the various regions of the world to attain a picture of the development of braille systems and the degree of uniformity achieved.

Unfortunately, many letters sent out by the sub-committee remain unanswered. However, the Arabic-speaking countries and those in Central and South America and 37 other countries have provided the sub-committee with their braille systems; 24 have not.

### **Sub-Committee on Mathematics and Science** (formerly named the Sub-Committee on Mathematic, Chemical and Scientific Symbols)

Coordination and Information Centre: Organización Nacional de Ciegos de Espana  
Prim, 3  
Madrid 4, Spain

<i>Chairman:</i>	Mr. Francisco Rodrigo Dominguez	— Spain
<i>Members:</i>	Mr. W. B. L. Poole	— United Kingdom
	Mr. Igor V. Proskurjakov	— USSR
	Mr. Abraham Nemeth	— USA

This dynamic group handed in an encouraging "activities carried out" report, a small idea of which is given here, a working program with short, medium, and long term objectives; an absolute essential, the establishment of a secretariat for the sub-committee by the Spanish National Organization for the Blind with expenses met by this national organization; correspondence with the most important braille printing houses in various linguistic areas; preparation of a questionnaire of symbols, notations and illustrative examples which was sent to all the members of the sub-committee for study and completion by their own teams of experts; together with the questionnaire a second copy was



sent filled out by the Spanish team with the symbols used in the U Notation of the Braille System, a synthesis of the European and Spanish American codes and which, by chance, incorporates some interesting rules of the Japanese and Brazilian codes and coincides with the Soviet code in many points; study of the answers to the questionnaire and preparation of a list of common representations and their proposal to the members of the sub-committee as a basis for future work; letter contact with heads of WCWB delegations requesting that they establish groups similar to this in their countries, and to keep in contact with the secretariat of the Sub-Committee on Mathematics and Science.

The Sub-Committee on Mathematics and Science has also planned its working program for the next quinquennium. It is a well-thought-out continuation of the work begun—wide personal contact not only through the 1979 General Assembly but also constantly with separate members and delegations and through articles and notices to be published in the sub-committee's bulletins; publishing of reports on the state of unification, the agreements reached and, hopefully, publication of a universal code; the setting up of a file system on newly created symbols, ones never included, and established representations which give difficulty so they may be further studied; the promotion of regional sub-committee meetings or seminars for the training of experts in the universal code, the analysis of occupations accessible to blind mathematicians and scientists, and the exchange of experience among outstanding professionals.

The bulletin to be circulated is well planned and stimulating for the experts and delegation members to give their bit in choosing appropriate representations. The rules set up for choice allow wide participation with a game sense of interesting cooperation.

### **Sub-Committee on Braille Music Codes**

<i>Chairman:</i>	Mr. Guglielmo Vassio	— Italy
<i>Members:</i>	Mr. Zoilo Lara de Toledo	— Brazil
	Mrs. Edward J. Krolick	— USA
	Mr. Shigeo Hayashi	— Japan

Mr. Vassio elaborated a short history of attempts to unify musical codes since 1929 and tried to establish contacts to try to convoke an international conference to ratify agreements. Finding cooperation very rare, Mr. Vassio preferred to withdraw his name as chairman.

During the next quinquennium, the CCA will undoubtedly re-form this sub-committee which will certainly strive to bring to completion the ideals of Mr. Vassio and those of other points of view will be reconciled so that unification of the code can be brought about.

### **Sub-Committee on Talking Books and Broadcasts for the Blind**

Coordination and Information Center: 15 West, 16th Street  
New York, N.Y. 10011  
USA

<i>Chairman:</i>	Mr. Peter Hanke	— USA
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<i>Members:</i>	Miss Ulla Cahling	— Sweden
	Mr. Tibor Vas	— Hungary
	Mr. Edno Facco	— Brazil
	Mr. D. J. Roskilly	— United Kingdom

The name of this sub-committee has been added on to due to the importance of special band radio broadcasts for the blind in the United States. The success of these broadcasts in that country makes the extension of its use to other countries desirable for study.

Questionnaires have been sent to members of the sub-committee with a later one, developed from information received from sub-committee members, to be sent to countries with Talking Book programs.

The chairman of this sub-committee called a meeting of its members at the Royal National Institute for the Blind in London, January 8-11, to better be able to study the resources of talking book centers in each country and study each country's possibilities for broadcasts.

### **Sub-Committee on Mechanical Braille Large Type Production and Distribution**

Coordination and Information Center: Am Schlag 8  
D-3550 Marburg 1  
Postfach 1160  
West Germany

<i>Chairman:</i>	Mr. Karl Britz	— West Germany
<i>Members:</i>	Mr. K. C. Shah	— India
	Mr. A. B. Oni	— Nigeria

It has been difficult for this sub-committee to find out how many countries have braille printing houses and how many each country has. Thus, the importance of cooperation and promptness in answering correspondence is once again evident. Up to the date of the preparation of this report, the Sub-Committee on Mechanical Braille Large Type Production and Distribution was able to inform the CCA that some 51 countries have presses. An overall estimate is that there should be between 90 to 100 large and small houses in the world.

This sub-committee plans to continue in its efforts in contacting all braille printing houses so that it can learn exactly what methods and equipment are being used and so that it can inform the houses on the latest developments in the field.

### **Sub-Committee on Computerized Braille Production and Other Media for the Blind and Visually Handicapped**

Coordination and Information Center: P.O. Box 208  
Bedford, Mass. 01730  
USA

<i>Chairman:</i>	Mr. Derrick W. Croisdale	— United Kingdom
<i>Members:</i>	Mr. R. A. J. Gildea	— USA
	Mr. H. Werner	— West Germany

Once again the compiling of data, contacting people and organizations, and disseminating information were the starting points. Work began with Mr. Gildea compiling a directory of people and organizations which can be used to direct inquirers to the most likely helpful sources of information and advice. Mr. Werner made up a questionnaire the date of which should yield comparative production systems. Mr. Croisdale organized a conference in London—May 29 to June 1—on computerized braille production as one more step in bringing together people in the field in the effort to disseminate information on the use of advanced electronic technology efficiently and effectively in the production of printed material for the blind and visually handicapped.

The RNIB offered to host this meeting of singular importance, being the first international meeting on this subject. The state of the art of the many present uses and the possible future uses of electronic technology was to be “irradiated” among those who have been involved in this work from its beginning and those who are now entering it.

### **Sub-Committee on Library Services**

Coordination and Information Center: 1291 Taylor Street, N.W.  
Washington, DC 20542  
USA

<i>Chairman:</i>	Mr. Frank Kurt Cylke	— USA
<i>Members:</i>	Mr. P. J. A. de Villiers	— South Africa
	Miss Françoise Hébert	— Canada
	Mr. Kazuo Honma	— Japan

Since libraries are obviously both resources and targets for any working organization or simple individual, and it is even more so in the case of WCWB, the advent of a sub-committee on library services was inevitable. The sub-committee will work closely with the Working Group of Libraries for the Blind of the International Federation of Library Associations to address standardization of recorded formats to the promotion of international exchange, to pursue internationally acceptable applications of postal rules and regulations. In addition, a standard for bibliographic format will be developed and proselytized.

### **Adult Education**

Adult education is one of the goals of the CCA. Consequently, a sub-committee should have been established for centralizing study and action in this area. Two different points of view were raised:

- that education in general is dealt with by the International Council for the Education of the Visually Handicapped, a consultative committee to the WCWB;
- some members thought, however, that the updating of education for adults is a new method linked to cultural aspects; thus it should be a goal of the CCA.

There is a need to establish a policy in this area which should be settled upon by these two groups in the next quinquennium.

## Meetings

A quick run-down of meetings would be that the CCA was invited to and members were present at: The International Federation of Library Associations conferences in Brussels in 1977 and then again in Prague in 1978. CCA members were also present at the European Regional Committee Meeting, the Conference of the Directors of Braille Printing Houses and Braille Libraries in Madrid, and the Intergovernmental Copyright Committee meetings, together with the World Intellectual Property Organization, in Paris, November 28–December 6, 1977, and in Geneva, February 5–9, 1979.

On the 11th and 12th August, 1977, the CCA held a general meeting at the UNESCO Headquarters. The vitalizing presence of Mr. Nils-Ivar Sundberg, Chief of the UNESCO Special Education Unit, and Mr. Boris V. Zimin, President of the WCWB, gave impetus to the meeting. All members of the CCA and most sub-committee chairmen were present, allowing presentation and full discussion of action plans. Other matters such as copyrights and the books *Braille as a Reading Medium* and *World Braille Usage* were discussed.

It was inspiring that although work has begun in late 1976 some of the sub-committees had made such good headway.

## World Braille Usage

There are many people to thank back through the years for keeping the effort toward the re-editing and reprinting of *World Braille Usage* alive and others who finally welded all the ever evasive possibilities together into the UNESCO grant, which permits the reprinting.

The UNESCO grant is solid, heartening proof that inter-committee, national and international and private cooperation, hard work, and good will are vital to our work and manifestly so in our finally being able to revise, update, and reprint *World Braille Usage*. This book is essential as a reference book. Teachers, transcribers, and innumerable other professionals and the blind and visually handicapped themselves will again have this valuable, reliable, universal reference source to turn to.

## Braille: A Medium of Communication for the Visually Handicapped

We feel most fortunate to have found Mr. Barry Hampshire to continue the work already begun by Dr. Jeanne Kenmore. The book does not overlap *World Braille Usage* in that it pays greater attention to recent historical background, current research and development in and the future trends of aspects of braille and its usage, all aspects of production from selection of material to distribution, and existing braille code systems.

At the time of writing this report, the book's final title and publication date had not been decided upon.

The years 1974–1979 were highly gratifying years of the CCA and its Sub-Committees in spite of start-up difficulties.

Small groups, the sub-committees, were able to work intently with matters broken down into manageable size; long-needed contacts with



library services were established; another member was added to the staff of the Special Education Unit by the Director General of UNESCO; contacts were made with the Brazilian delegation at UNESCO to support proposals to obtain greater financial and material resources for the Division of Structures, Contents, Methods and Techniques of Education—UNESCO. These many elements must be drawn into a tightly knit core so that the intensified activities of the years ahead can flow smoothly to the right targets.

The breakthroughs, in some cases veritable victories, of crossing set international boundaries by the waiving of copyrights and the more amorphous but equally disconcerting boundaries encountered in the distinguishing, identifying, and unifying of symbols, separating and delineating dialect–language–nation lines, and, with little exaggeration, crossing the intellectual food line with the offering of two reference books must be carried forward.

Years of contact with the general public have shown the Chairwoman of the CCA the public's lack of awareness of the difficulty of not only the international exchange of reading and "listening" material, but also the production of it. That the general public is unaware might be so disturbing, but the confusion and dejection that this situation causes the blind and visually handicapped and the professionals, especially the young and newly trained, not yet hardened by combat, who prepare them to take their rightful, useful place in society, is devastating. To be able to state this before fully attended meetings of international groups, the IGC and WIPO, that can almost control our main artery for learning was more than an honor. It was a firm confirmation that much more can be and will be done.

The time is ripe; the opportunities are here. This is the Year of the Child, 1980 will mark the Centennial of Helen Keller, and 1981 the Year of the Handicapped. There is much we can and must do.

## REPORT OF THE SUB-COMMITTEE ON BRAILLE MUSIC CODES

by Professor Guglielmo Vassio, Chairman

The profession of musician has always been one of the most accessible, prestigious and remunerative for the blind and, I would venture to say, one of the most congenial. Although this is true of bygone days, when there was no practical system of writing, with the coming of Louis Braille's marvellous invention—the key which was to open the doors of culture to all visually handicapped persons—a veritable revolution occurred, to an extent that no-one, even the most optimistic, could possibly have foreseen such a vast and universal cultural development.

The inability of the first printing presses set up in the various countries to supply all the music necessary to blind musicians, prompted them to apply to other countries in order to enlarge their repertory, while transcribers who had to reproduce all kinds of music in braille were very often compelled to create conventional signs corresponding to the inkprint, so as to translate the ideas of the author as faithfully as possible, thus making it more difficult and complicated to write and hard to understand. This is why the Resolutions and the Code resulting from the International Conference in Paris, 1929, translated into most of the languages of the civilized world, were acclaimed with great relief and practically all blind musicians were agreed at least on the adoption of symbols, which had been the principal aim of the Conference, even if not on the lay-out of the text on the braille page.

From then on, production increased to a great extent in many countries, mainly due to the work and generosity of the American Braille Press (now Helen Keller International, Inc.) which only World War II was to stop.

The creation of WCWB gave fresh hope to professional and amateur musicians, as it recommended not only the extension of the 1929 Code to meet new requirements, but also the universal adoption of a standardized form of presentation of texts in braille.

However, although there was idyllic agreement at the 1929 Conference, that of 1954, also convened in Paris, erected an almost insurmountable barrier between the English-speaking countries and the others. In fact, this Conference completely missed its principal aim, which was to come to an agreement on the presentation of music in braille; as we know, the delegates left the French capital in complete disagreement on almost everything. But what is even more serious is that the secretary of the Conference, the late Mr. Spanner, edited in 1956 a *Revised Manual of Braille Music Notation* "based on decisions reached at the International Conference on Braille Music, Paris, 1954." This is more in the nature of a treatise which, if it had not claimed to interpret the "decisions" and the spirit of the Conference, would be

good and satisfactory, as it is so rich in material, tables and examples. It is difficult to understand why the author decided to change many of the signs adopted by the 1920 Conference.

All this, together with the refusal to collaborate with the delegates, gave rise to indignation among the experts of other countries, who saw the Code officially adopted by the English-speaking countries, without taking into account contrary opinions.

This is why, in 1960, Dr. Reuss of the Federal Republic of Germany was to present, in his turn, a treatise which took into account the symbols adopted in 1929 and, at the same time, endeavoured to broaden the whole subject.

From then on, the world of blind musicians was first of all confused, then divided into two camps: the English-speaking world, which defends the Spanner method, against the other, who see in Reuss's work the continuation of a tradition officially recognized in 1929.

While I was able to collaborate from 1963 with Dr. Reuss up to the time of his death, Mr. Spanner and Mr. Busbridge, Head of the Music Department of the Royal National Institute for the Blind, have always refused, be it very politely, an open and objective discussion on braille music notation and, by so doing, have kept alive the division between musicians.

On the other hand, it must be admitted that Dr. Reuss made the mistake of publishing two editions in German and two in French, all four in contrast with each other, whether concerning the presentation of the text or the employment of some of the ordinal and ordinary signs.

In view of the failure of the 1954 Conference, and in order to reach an agreement, at least between some countries, several national commissions were set up in the sixties which tried to find a satisfactory solution. Thus, in 1967 and 1969, the German, Italian, Spanish and French commissions, meeting in Italy and in Yugoslavia, reached agreement on practically everything.

After having participated in certain meetings as a member of the Italian Commission, in 1970 the Sub-Committee for Braille Music Notation was set up within the context of the World Braille Committee and I was asked to be chairman. These were the most productive years for the advancement of the work for, thanks to the Italian Union of the Blind and to the National Library in my country, I was able to arrange bilateral contacts with French, German, Spanish and Czech experts, where almost total agreement was reached. Once again I tried to approach the British colleagues, notably Mr. Spanner himself and Mr. Busbridge, but they did not wish to discuss the matter, asserting that their notation worked very well. I then contacted Dr. Pielasch, Secretary of the European Regional Committee, who stated officially in Prague that there was no need for a standardized notation, as there are now few blind musicians.

On the other hand, I received a very favourable response from Mr. Kondratov, Vice-President of the All-Russia Association of the Blind, but, in fact, his experts were already working on a new code in eight braille volumes, largely based on the Reuss Code—so I have been told.

Suddenly, without ever having been informed about the dissolution

of the Committee created in 1970, Mrs. Dorina de Gouvêa Nowill, Chairman of WCWB Committee on Cultural Affairs, requested me in March 1977 to chair the sub-committee on Braille Music Codes, giving me the names of the other members; I do not know by whom they were chosen or on what criteria, i.e. a lady from the USA, a Brazilian, a Czech and a Japanese.

At this point I hastened to establish a working plan, which was approved by the meeting of the Cultural Affairs Committee held in Paris in August 1977. I began straight away to (a) increase the number of experts I already had; and (b) send the new members of the sub-committee the first part of the agreements reached to date with the other experts. However, with the exception of Mrs. Krolick of the USA, with whom we did some very valuable work, thanks to her willingness, her talent and her active support, which I cannot praise enough, I only received one reply from the other members of the sub-committee during a whole year. If all the members had replied as promptly as Mrs. Krolick, I am sure we would have soon been able to have a fruitful discussion and organize a conference to ratify the agreements; otherwise, it is simply absurd to pursue useless work which entails years of sacrifice. Besides, some members of the sub-committee are not supported by a committee invested with official powers, which means that it is impossible to reach positive results.

As if this were not enough, our sub-committee cannot count on financial support of any kind, even for preparing the first draft of a code or simply a pamphlet to serve as a basis for discussion. . . .!

Therefore it only remains for me to resign, thanking the experts who have helped me during these years, in particular Mrs. Krolick, who has been of great encouragement to me and thanks to whom I hope at least to create a good music notation for use in my country.

Finally, I should like to greet this Assembly and express the hope that my eventual successor will be lucky enough to have better results in the work which, in spite of all that has been affirmed, could still be very useful to many colleagues who find in music an honourable means of support and a source of satisfaction.



## INFORMATION THROUGH THE SPOKEN WORD

### **"The Radio Programme for the Blind and Cooperation Through TV and Other Audible Media"**

by Hideyuki Iwahashi, Vice-President, WCWB

Today, TV, radio and newspapers are the main media for diffusing the news and information all over the world.

In Japan, the NHK (Japan Broadcasting Corporation) started a radio programme for the blind in 1964. This 30-minute programme is broadcast on Sunday morning at 9.30 and again on Saturday at 13.00.

The NHK has about 1,700 programmes in all on radio and TV but this is the only programme produced for which we would prefer there to be no need, for it is originally a programme for the blind. Blind listeners represent less than 0.1 per cent of the present radio audience, but among the 250,000 blind people in Japan, 70 per cent of them follow this programme. The programme covers various fields, such as topics and news concerning the blind followed by discussions or explanations; topics and personality of the month; introduction of various interest groups; "Our Circles" through which listeners are invited to participate in hobby circles; technical problems of administration or medical information on moxibustion, massage, and acupuncture, etc. Preparations are now under way for a programme on Japanese Koto music and the contributions blind people have made in the history of this classical music.

Blind people's interest in hobbies, sports and recreation is just as great and as enthusiastic as that of the sighted. Through radio and TV the blind are becoming more interested in fishing, chess, go, cooking and many kinds of sports. Many have learned the rules of golf through TV and enjoy listening to the sound of the gold-ball falling into the hole.

There are also many sighted people who listen to the programmes for the blind. One day, after the interview of a physiotherapist was broadcast, a number of people rushed to his clinic or made telephone calls to ask for his advice. This series of interviews was really very successful. Eighty blind people were chosen and interviewed at their place of work. Among them were the president of a fishing company who is able to account for his ships at work in the East China Sea with the help of braille; a farmer who has succeeded in poultry-raising; a typist who is working at a court of justice as a stenographer; a schoolmaster who learned to use the abacus and is running an abacus school; the president of a public works company who lost his sight and both arms in the war and is still directing the workers as a supervisor, and so on.

These examples give hope and encouragement to those who have become blind and have been driven to despair, or even to sighted people who are wretched and hopeless. These interviews are recorded and copies are available on loan at the two main braille libraries in Japan.

More than 100 copies are used monthly by schools for the blind, groups or individuals.

Besides these radio programmes designed for the blind, there are many kinds of spots sponsored by the large industries and shown between the regular programmes of TV. For instance, under the title "Can you walk on the street blind-folded?" a blind man with a white cane or a guide-dog is shown crossing the road. Then instructions are given as to how to guide a blind man properly. It is just a half-minute spot but seems to be quite effective. Usually, I go to my office by train, changing twice at the large, crowded stations in Osaka. Since this spot was shown, there is always someone who kindly asks me if I need his help.

All over Japan, around public facilities, at the railway stations and at the main street crossings, we find that part of the ground is paved with special paving stones. These are 30 cm square with 36 raised dots on the surface. Each dot is 3.5 cm in diameter and 0.6 cm high. Naturally, this is to help the blind find their way but, at the same time, it reminds the sighted of the blind and their difficulties. Consequently, public understanding of and cooperation with the visually handicapped are very much increasing.

Another traffic aid for the blind is the sound-signal. A simple melody or the twitter of a bird tell the blind when to cross the road. There are some who complain that it is noisy, but even the kindergarten children and old people know it is the signal for the blind. The braille indication on the automatic sales-machines, too, is a silent appeal to the sighted for their cooperation.

NHK has built the bridges between the sighted and the blind and between blind people themselves through the radio programme. The spots on the TV, the sound signal, the dotted pavement, and the braille indications at public places call the attention of the public to the need for cooperation with the blind, who are small in number and apt to be passive. We should realize the importance of PR from our side to enlist the cooperation of the sighted.

## TECHNOLOGY OF AND FOR THE BLIND

by Jim Bronson, United States of America

This paper is about how international cooperation and coordination can lead to better technical aids for blind people—specifically, how to get more quality for a lower price.

### Recent Industry Growth

Think back for a moment about the technological aids for the blind that were available at the time of our last World Assembly in São Paulo, and now compare that with the situation today. There has been a dramatic growth in what may be called the blindness industry. From a few pioneering groups in 1974 we now have at least three manufacturers of electronic mobility aids, at least four developers and manufacturers of print reading machines, five electronic braille devices out and more being developed, a range of medium and high speed paper braille embossing machines emerging, and, for partially sighted, a multitude of television magnification systems. In addition, developments in the micro-electronics field have opened the way for synthetic speech to convey information quickly and easily in everything from electronic calculators to telephone switchboards, computerized games, and sophisticated print readers.

What do all of these industrial developments mean to the blind consumer? In my experience, technology has given blind people both hope and disappointment; for some, expanded job opportunities or better education; for others, bitter frustration because a device's potential was oversold by its enthusiastic developers, or because it only worked a short time and then couldn't be fixed, or because it cost a lot of money but it too quickly became obsolete.

### Industry Achievements

How about the successes of the blindness industry? These successes have led to major changes in legislation. For instance, in some developed countries there are large scale funding programs to disseminate technical aids nationwide. Also, in some developing countries training centers for technical aids have been established, both through the efforts of highly dedicated individuals in the developing countries and through the gift of international assistance from organizations abroad, a good number of whom are represented in this room today.

Technology is offering more independent living and upward mobility to blind people. Thousands of blind users worldwide and increasing sales of aids show that we can expect further dramatic changes by the time this group reconvenes in 1984. What will the blindness industry look like then?

I would like to suggest some guidelines in applying technology for the blind so that in 1984 we can look back on five years of a maximum of technological successes and a minimum of disappointments.

Over these coming five years a lot of money (both public and private) is going to be spent to make technical aids. I hope that my guidelines will help increase the effectiveness of these capital investments so that the blind consumer really gets the increased independence and earning power that modern technical aids can offer.

### **Suggested Industry Guidelines**

First. *Standards of excellence* must be put forward to developers and manufacturers to ensure the following:

*Performance Specifications* (does it do what they say it does?)

*Reliability* (has it been well designed and skillfully made to minimize failures?)

*Training Support* (are appropriate materials and techniques available for training users—are the materials in braille, on cassette or in appropriate languages?)

*Service Support* (when failures occur, have repair parts and a skilled repairman been provided for?)

*Conscientious Distribution* (is an experienced person available in the country to help with importation, training, applications information and organizing funding?)

In short, is the manufacturer taking responsibility for supporting his products and customers, or is there a quick disappearance after the sale?

Second. Devices must *meet real needs* of the blind users. No matter how interesting the technology is, have objective studies been carried out with sufficiently large populations of blind people to determine the benefits and the conditions in which these benefits are obtained?

Here it is interesting to note how many blind people are employed by the manufacturer and at what levels of authority. That is, are blind people giving input at each stage of planning, production and distribution of the device? If so, there is a better chance that the technology will be serving blind people rather than blind people serving the technology—that is, serving as the reason for attempting a marginally useful but technologically intriguing objective.

Third, There must be a reasonable expectation that *devices will not quickly become obsolete*. A user of a technical aid invests time and a lot of positivity in incorporating it into his or her life. The purchaser invests money, which is usually allocated at the expense of some other highly deserving projects. All three investments (time, positivity and money) are very significant and they deserve a strong effort into the future to keep the device up-to-date and moving with the times.

Are there provisions for incorporating new technological advances, even in the early manufactured units? How about accessories? Is the device flexible enough to grow with the user and meet future needs? Is the manufacturer committed to his products, to expanding its potential, or is this a sideline interest that may fall away because of pressures in the mainline business?



A good indicator of long term potential in a product is the organizational stability of the manufacturer. If the device is purchased today, is there reason to believe that service, spare parts and other support will be there next month, next year, ten years from now? Does the manufacturer have adequate financial resources? Can he compete in tomorrow's world for the skilled personnel who will make long term growth happen?

It is appropriate that we examine these suggested guidelines now, amend them as needed and then urge every organization of and for the blind to use them. Consumer advocacy in the field of technological aids for the blind is coming of age now, and it needs to be organized, visible, responsible and bold.

### **Proposed "Industrial Affairs" Subcommittee**

Let me read in part from our constitution under Article II, Purposes and Functions. "To achieve its aims the Council shall, in particular, work towards the direction of efforts for the introduction of minimum standards for the welfare of the blind in all parts of the world and the improvement of such standards."

I suggest, then, that an appropriate subcommittee be formed specifically to cooperate with developers and manufacturers in the blindness industry to ensure the highest quality possible. It could be composed of representatives from industry, development and research institutes, service agencies and blind consumers. You might call this an "Industrial Affairs" group. Its functions could include the following:

### **Suggested Subcommittee Functions**

(1) *Promote standards of excellence.*

This is largely an educational task. The WCWB, along with IFB and ICEVH, are the leaders who can raise the consciousness of the industry that serves blind people. If the best is expected, the best will be obtained.

(2) *Ensure that devices meet real needs.*

Here international coordination of evaluation studies done by member countries can minimize duplication of efforts and increase the spread of well-considered information.

(3) *Call for needed developments.*

By this, I mean focusing attention on needs of the blind that can be met with technology. This could be through consultation with potential developers, those groups or government agencies who may give money for the development, and appropriate technical committees of the International Organizations. Here is a great opportunity for eliminating duplications of effort through international coordination.

(4) *Promote Standardization of key product features.*

Every industry has its standards authority. The work begun in Paris last year towards an agreement on cassette braille recording formats was a brave beginning, but the situation was already

beyond the stage where agreement was possible. However, there are other opportunities for standards. For instance, a standard code is needed for formatting material when going from electronic braille to a printed or embossed page.

(5) *Assist in achieving effective legislation.*

The laws in one country supporting technical aids may influence the adoption of similar laws elsewhere. In this age of large government programs, member countries can benefit from sharing their experiences. As a classic American writer once said, "Nothing succeeds like success."

(6) *Develop international purchasing power.*

Bulk orders generally get a lower price. If international agreement can produce orders large enough to bring the manufacturer's unit cost down, then the savings can be shared with the buyer.

## **Conclusion**

In conclusion, I would like to refer to our theme. With cooperation (and some hard work) I feel that the blindness industry has the potential of transforming many blind people from being welfare recipients into being independent producers in our economic system. Good technology intelligently applied can allow blind people to be increasingly productive members of society. And when this is achieved all parties gain—the blind person, the government, private agencies and society as a whole.

## THE ECONOMIC PRODUCTION OF BASIC EQUIPMENT FOR BLIND PEOPLE

by Mr. Cedric W. Garland, Technical Officer  
Royal National Institute for the Blind, United Kingdom

Sir John Wilson recently said: "Nobody knows how many blind people there are in the world. Certainly the minimum estimate of sixteen million is likely to be an understatement."

However many there really are, one thing is quite certain, they will all be needing day to day assistance towards living in an essentially sighted world, and a large range of devices has been developed to help towards this end.

The latest edition of the International Guide to Aids and Appliances for blind and visually impaired persons published by the American Foundation for the Blind, lists out over 1,500 devices as being available from 270 different distributors in 28 countries, and this listing is by no means complete due to the recent rapid development in the field of electronics which has been readily applicable to the needs of the visually handicapped.

One can perhaps state the need for devices in three general categories of person. Firstly for the younger age grouping, aids for education are the most important. Secondly for those of working age emphasis must be placed on aids for employment coupled with the need for good mobility in getting to and from that employment. Thirdly, by far the greatest population of blind people are the elderly for whom aids are required largely for purposes of domesticity and leisure. Such generalisation is of course an over simplification of the true situation and within each of these categories one finds the need for both special purpose devices such as a braille computer terminal for the blind programmer, as well as the more general-purpose aids like braille writing equipment or walking stick or cane for which there is a large world-wide demand.

With sixteen million customers in mind, this paper is concerned with this latter type of device to which we are referring as "basic equipment for the blind" or equipment which is universal in its application by blind people to meet a common need, and our interest lies in how such equipment could be produced economically. This question is rather difficult to answer because what would be considered economic in one country might be found quite uneconomic elsewhere; however it must be observed that equipment for the blind does tend to be more expensive than comparable equipment for the sighted, the cost for instance of possibly the world's most widely-used braille writing machine compared with that of an ordinary mechanical typewriter, indicates that the braille writer is three to four times as costly. Mechanically these machines compare fairly well in complexity and the main

reason the braille writer is so costly is that it is produced in relatively small quantity.

Most of those organizations for the blind that are concerned with the manufacture of aids for their national or local blind population, will be faced with this common problem of dealing mainly with fairly small quantity manufacture, and this is aggravated by a degree of uncertainty as to the rate at which these aids will be sold once manufactured, so over-production is avoided, also no guarantee exists as to when and what size will be future repeat manufacturing orders. This all adds up to a rather unsatisfactory situation where rarely can one justify extensive expenditure on manufacturing tooling, with the result that there is a high proportion of manual activity in the manufacturing process and because of this the cost of the end product will inevitably be high.

In Western Countries the cost of labour is very high and economic production of any manufactured item lies in reducing the human involvement to a minimum by investing substantial finance in tooling to render the manufacturing process as automatic as possible; this in turn usually demands long production runs so that tool costs can be recovered over a large number of articles produced without making those articles too expensive. In the field of equipment for the blind such long manufacturing runs rarely occur and this is perhaps not surprising because, take for example braille pocket frames; on examination of the previously mentioned International Guide one finds listed some 84 different frames being manufactured for 16 distributors in 12 countries; quantity demand therefore exists but it is spread very thinly between these distributors.

One must observe that many of these frames, made in both plastic and metal in different countries, have in fact a great similarity in design and function and it is difficult to understand how one can justify the need for so many variations of such a basic aid. This situation has no doubt evolved over very many years when the cost of manufacturing labour was not a significant factor but the answer to reducing costs today must lie in the adoption of modern manufacturing techniques and somehow substantially increasing manufacturing quantity in order to gain the financial benefits offered by long run manufacture.

The only possibility of doing this would appear to lie in some agreement being reached as to what would constitute an internationally acceptable range of frames having an internationally acceptable size of braille cell in order that fewer manufacturers could produce for a world market.

Having considerably longer quantities one might then justify the use of modern automatic or semi-automatic manufacturing tooling, probably financed by international resources. The setting up time for the tooling, being spread over longer runs, would also contribute to a reduction in cost of the finished article as would the bulk purchase of the materials involved. This is probably the thinking of those organizations that have invested much money in injection moulds in order to produce very inexpensive braille frames; they will however need a world-wide market to recover their tool costs if that is their intention.



Sophisticated tooling is usually very expensive as is the cost of labour and machine time; the more automatic the tooling is the less becomes the machine time and labour involved, thus the configuration of equipment and manpower adopted in any manufacturing process is a fairly fine balance of choice related to the degree of productivity and on the finance to be invested, which in turn dictates the cost of the end product. As mentioned before, normal commercial engineering practice is to recover the cost of tooling and its maintenance by placing a small percentage charge on each of the articles produced from that tooling; however, even if articles like braille frames were produced more centrally the length of production run would probably still be small in comparison to commercial levels. One way of reducing the cost of articles for the blind is for the tool cost to be absorbed by those organizations that might be concerned in such an international manufacturing venture. With this arrangement the tooling is jointly owned by those organizations and its ongoing maintenance charges would also be their responsibility.

The suggestion for an international standardization of aids and appliances is by no means new; it has been argued that the present wide selection of aids produced in so many countries provides blind people with a wide choice to suit personal preferences and local needs, and to reduce this choice would be a retrograde event. Similarly most organizations involved with the manufacture of aids may also feel a preference to retain close control and influence over their own manufacturing programme and quality control. However, with certain specific exceptions, the question of standardization of aids has only been discussed in a rather general way without the constraints of our present subject referring to purely basic equipment, or those aids which are known to be of elementary necessity to blind people which could be so reduced in cost by high volume production. The items of equipment envisaged include canes, braille writing aids and the relevant sizes of braille paper, diagram-making instruments, geographical and other educational equipment, etc., in other words those items for everyday use which have universal application, where larger quantity production should lead to manufacturing economy.

Many organizations including the RNIB have a very large selection of canes and sticks available to suit most people's choice, we however at the RNIB still occasionally import canes to satisfy particular individuals' preferences and for experimental purposes. The features designed into RNIB canes are dictated not by the RNIB but by blind people themselves who participate in field trials with prototypes prior to quantity production. I mention this as an example of a basic device where our designs have evolved over many years of trial and error and from my experience I must make the observation that it would probably be a very difficult matter indeed to obtain a consensus of opinion on an international scale as to the qualities required of one or more models for large scale manufacture for world use; however if the financial benefits of large scale long run production are considered important, the cane is perhaps an ideal device to commence with as an initiating

trial in international cooperation, especially now that the long cane technique is so widely adopted.

The further standardization in design or dimension is carried out, the more can production be facilitated, notably by permitting the use of standard tools having application to many products or parts of products, as distinct from the need for special tools having severely limited application. Product design for large batch production is quite a different matter from design for the small batch manufacture with which most producers of equipment for the blind have to contend. Standardization involves a very important aspect of design, particularly in engineering where the tendency with aids for the blind has been to design for performance or service rather than for production. Designing for production as well as performance opens greater opportunity for economy in manufacture by widening the choice of materials, machines and processes which can be adopted. Actually any method that shortens the production cycle from the rough material stage to the tested final product, not only results in better service to the customer but minimizes the period during which money is unproductive in the form of work in progress.

Metal braille frames are a very good example of devices for the blind which have largely evolved rather than having been designed; they would present an interesting economic exercise if large quantity manufacture was possible in the investigation of modern processes and materials, as opposed to the traditional embossing and piercing methods currently used.

The economic production of aids for the blind is not purely a matter of consideration being given to producing a large quantity of any particular device that already exists, but firstly specifying the qualities required of the aid to meet international user requirements. This no doubt would entail making comparisons between existing devices in order to specify the required product; it does however necessitate that a standardization be arrived at by general consent. The development of that device for production to suit the estimated manufacturing quantities required on, say, an annual basis, is a highly skilled matter where manufacturing process, choice and quality of material, quality control and reliability of the end product are all taken into account. The next step lies in the production of design drawings and preferably samples for trial and circulation to those potential manufacturers who possess the necessary plant and skills to produce the device to an acceptable world standard, in order to obtain competitive cost estimates for both the manufacturing tooling and ultimate production. The countries selected to quote for this undertaking would depend largely on the economics of the day, the availability of materials and the technology involved and where trade barriers do not exist.

The question of financing such a venture is of course a matter which only the WCWB can consider, as is the question of monitoring the production programmes which ideally can only be satisfactorily carried out by organizations normally resident in the countries where manufacture would take place, to ensure that the various stages of production are working smoothly and on schedule, and to undertake at least an

ongoing sampling inspection of the finished product to ensure that quality is maintained.

Distribution should be carried out via those institutions or organizations concerned with the well-being of blind people, in order to take full financial advantage of duty-free importation as arranged under the Florence Agreement, which will be applicable provided equivalent articles are not already being manufactured in the importing country.

I mentioned earlier that the long cane would perhaps be a suitable device for which to carry out an initial investigation into the economic advantages that can be gained from long run production. One cannot quote examples of the financial savings possible without going through the preparatory stages for production which I have listed or without knowing the quantity of canes likely to be involved. Such a study would however provide the World Council with a factual indication of the likely financial benefits so that comparison can be made with the cost of long canes now available from many countries. If that study could be carried out by all those countries at present producing long canes, all working to the same specification, the exercise will be very much more informative.

## ECONOMIC PRODUCTION OF BASIC EQUIPMENT

by Marvin Berkowitz, Ph.D.

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The economic production of basic products compensating for vision loss is subject to the overriding problem of low demand. Despite the prevalence of about 42 million persons in the world with visual acuity of 20/200 or less (a level considered as legal blindness in a number of industrialized countries), few nations in the world have populations of blind persons so large that the most efficient production techniques can be employed to satisfy the demand. In those countries, like India with over 10 million blind, where the annual incidence of blindness remains so high that the most efficient production techniques might be utilized to satisfy the potential need, the *effective* demand of purchasers ready to buy is either small because comprehensive rehabilitation of the blind is at an early stage of development, or competition between producing organizations splinters the potential demand, or the potential users do not have an awareness of or the funds to purchase products. This means that the requirements of the lowest cost production methods achieving economies of scale are rarely satisfied.

The problems of economic manufacture of products complementing the basic equipment for the blind in the more industrial nations are somewhat different but follow also from manufacturing for low annual demand. In such instances, prices tend to be high, often two to fifty times higher for products performing the same functions designed for sighted persons—to illustrate, talking electronic calculators are being marketed for \$400 in the United States at a time when calculators with visual displays are available for \$10.

The price differentials of products designed for the general population that are adapted for use by the blind are lower than for specially produced devices but are none the less troublesome to the blind purchasers. It is not uncommon for adapted braille watches or clocks to sell at prices one and a half to two times those of unadapted models.

In the United States, the Howe Press and the American Printing House for the Blind produce most of the writing and measuring aids categorized as basic equipment. Some 30,000 legally blind school-children enrolled in elementary and secondary schools are the major consumers of these products. Perhaps 3,000 new enrolments occur each year that have new needs for rulers, protractors, braille slates, etc. In addition, there is a replacement demand. But the overall demand for any single item remains small and does not permit long production runs unless several years' supply is to be manufactured for inventory. Producing for large inventory ties up capital and is not something that firms like to do except where material scarcities exist resulting in long



lead times or there are complex and cost production set-ups. The American Foundation for the Blind produces few items that we have categorized as basic equipment but prefers to distribute products of other organizations where possible because to duplicate the already excess production capacity of other manufacturers for so small a market would be wasteful of this agency's scarce capital funds and infringe upon the ability of other organizations to achieve any economies of scale, which are ultimately passed on to the purchaser.

In the case of canes, we have yet to develop specifications for a small number of different canes useful in different environments and for different purposes that are acceptable to blind travellers. Hence different cane models proliferate the field—each one being produced in relatively small numbers for different size lengths. It is an unhappy situation for the consumer who largely cannot tell one cane from another.

Basic equipment compensating for the loss of vision is a relative term, usually taken to mean primarily those items essential for literacy, accurate measurement, counting and mobility. In particular, we take basic equipment to include, among other items:

1. Braille slates, styluses and erasers;
2. Simple measuring instruments—  
rulers, measuring rules and tapes (metric and English), compasses, protractors;
3. Raised line drawing tools—  
e.g., tools with spur wheels;
4. Writing guides and pads for print, script, or raised line drawings;
5. Abacus;
6. Rigid long canes.

Of course, the list may be extended; many of these products stem from needs of a formal academic education.\*

The demand for all special products for the blind stems from the functions in the society which the products aim to support and satisfy. In a sense, one fundamental question in determining priorities for preparing basic equipment is "what activities would the individuals of a given society be performing if they were not blind?" In societies where written communication is not a familiar part of daily life, where print magazines and books are relatively unavailable, where measurements are usually made in terms of strides or hand lengths, the demand for writing and measuring instruments is limited for all persons. In some countries, adult literacy rates are low, and one of the few times that an individual needs to write is to sign his/her name in order to vote. In other countries, arithmetic and counting skills for most of the population may be limited to the ability to use cash money as a medium of exchange.

In societies in which people do not normally venture out of their immediate home environments or villages, and where travel is visually

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\* See, for example, the handsome and beautifully made Voltas braille education kits prepared by Volrho Ltd., 19, J. N. Heredia Marg, Ballard Estate, Bombay 400-038, India.

along well-trodden roads and grooved footpaths, as for example to the village or family well, the need for orientation and mobility training is less than in a more mobile society. This also reduces demand for mobility aids which are basic equipment in more urbanized societies where individuals need to travel out of their immediate environments in order to survive. The point is that the overall plans for economic development and the likely family and community roles of sighted persons in a given society become guides to roles which blind persons may strive to attain. In a rural society the needs of a blind person are likely to be the needs of a farmer.\*

The selection of appropriate technology needs also to be guided by an assessment of the integration of the disabled persons, including the blind, into the society of a given country.

As well, in most developing nations, production of basic products needs to follow from specification of short-term national goals and objectives for rehabilitation of the blind.

Free public school education at the primary and secondary levels is not yet universal for children in many developing countries. In a number of countries where free education is provided, it is not compulsory. In both the developing and more advanced economies, inaccessibility, inadequate financial resources, insufficient educational equipment and lack of qualified staff are often obstacles to obtaining a formal education even where school is free and compulsory. These factors set the background for the education of blind children. Blind children are admitted to public schools in limited numbers in many countries and there may be considerable competition for places. In some countries, there may be only one special residential school for the blind. School enrolment of the blind, then, probably sets a limit on the effective demand for many basic products for the blind since blind persons who are not in school are unlikely to have the funds to purchase aids, or the awareness of and access to them.

Another source of demand is rehabilitation centers providing training in survival skills, activities of daily living, orientation and mobility and vocational skills. In the developing countries, such rehabilitation programs often are facsimiles of services found in the more advanced nations. Rehabilitation opportunities are usually limited and subject to the same constraints as those in schools—shortages of special equipment, shortages of trained personnel, shortages of financial resources. To illustrate, the first permanent orientation and mobility center in Asia was recently established in Indonesia. Even so, as is sometimes the case in the more industrial economies, the acquisition of sophisticated rehabilitation skills at urban centers in the developing economies, may be inconsistent with a simpler village lifestyle.

In the developing economies, prevocational preparation and vocational guidance services for the blind are relatively rare. Workshops

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\* Some typical tasks include: collecting water; bundling and tying grass and straw; cleaning a cow shed; feeding livestock; loading and unloading soil in bullock carts; pounding, grinding and sifting grain.

responsible for enhancement of aptitudes and skills are attached to some school for the blind, but placement services other than those in centers where training is conducted is uncommon. Among the vocational training courses, training of the blind for jobs as switchboard operators, vending stand operators, packaging and assembly work, light manufacture and teaching appear to be the most common.

The government is usually responsible for initiating vocational rehabilitation although church or private initiation of small programs is a regular occurrence.

The third source of demand for basic equipment stems from the employment opportunities of the blind. In the advanced economies, labor force participation of adults unable to see well enough to read regular print is half to one-third the level of sighted persons. In the developing economies where unemployment and underemployment is a more common way of life for the able-bodied, the blind fare worse. About three-quarters of the population of these nations live in rural areas which are basically agricultural economies, wherein light manufacture and cooperative agricultural ventures supplement small subsistence level family farming. With many able-bodied persons unable to find paid employment, countries are hard pressed to establish preference standards for the blind which would largely be unenforceable anyway. Cultural, religious and social differences about how the blind, disabled and sick are viewed in society, and the role of the extended family in taking care of its less fortunate members vary also and set the tone and goals for government programs as well as determining the rehabilitation potential of individuals. For example, the continued functioning of the caste system in India determines the life work of fathers and sons despite government decrees making the traditional caste system illegal. Legislative provisions reserving certain occupations for the blind, setting job quotas or anti-discrimination guidelines for the blind workers are not common. Opportunities in sheltered workshops are preferred in some countries in attempting to secure paid employment for blind persons but resettling persons from rural villages to these center-based facilities can be an emotional and practical problem.

Given all of the above constraints, the economic production of basic equipment follows the general requirements of economic production of any goods. For *each product* the following steps are required:

1. Clear definition of the products to be produced—this includes the specification of the desired features, how the product and each component is to operate following from the component's function. Ideally this is based on a human factors analysis of the needs of users and their capacity to employ the device in various settings. Consideration of similar products available from other countries, or products that may be copied or produced under license, should be given here.
2. Estimation of the annual demand for the product at various prices for each of the coming five years. High and low estimates reflecting a range of use under differing assumptions should be given.

3. Translation of the product definition into one or more alternate production designs, including dimensional sketches, layouts and blueprints. This should detail all component parts and quantities.
4. For each alternative production design, specification of the capital, equipment, material and labor needs for start-up as well as once production has begun. This may include work sampling and time and motion analysis of production steps, product or line layout, and an assessment of tool and die or molding requirements. Consideration of quality control and inspection requirements for each approach should be given.
5. Determination of the costs of all factors of production specified in the product designs—labor, materials, equipment, capital for inventory and procurement.
6. Preparation of total and unit production costs. Questions like over how long a period research, engineering design and start-up expenses that are to be amortized come up at this point. Distribution, marketing and warehousing expenses and those to cover warranty and maintenance must also be assessed.
7. Specification of constraints for:
  - (a) importation;
  - (b) capital resources for tooling up and manufacture;
  - (c) the availability of labor of the skills required;
  - (d) availability of equipment;
  - (e) availability of facilities for production, inventory and marketing;
  - (f) organization of quality control and maintenance;
  - (g) organization of production/manufacturing plans and standards.
8. Determination of preferred production approaches given the demand, available resources, specification of production alternatives and constraints. This step also includes preparation of break-even points with each alternative production approach.

The problems of production in developing economies are more severe because of limited capital, shortages of skilled craftsmen and import restrictions intended to conserve foreign exchange. Scarce foreign exchange means that some countries cannot readily import the 500–1,000 braille slates that they need each year, nor second-hand equipment to produce these locally, and are induced to manufacture these products uneconomically. Low quality is also a common but unfortunate consequence.

There are many ways to prepare basic equipment, and the appropriate technology should depend on the availability and costs of resources.

There is probably not a better mobility aid in many countries than a long bamboo stick cut to the appropriate length; the tapered and shaped hollow aluminum shaft that has become the standard as a mobility aid in the developed economies probably has little to speak for it in rural parts of Africa or India. But lightweight aluminum or nickel plate braille slates that are well-machined and finished provide the kind of



durability and standardized cell size that makes their use in the developing countries advantageous. A steel wire set into a wooden handle is an easily prepared and adequate stylus.

There is a great scope for utilizing unemployed and underemployed workers from a large available labor force in the less developed nations which would not be economically viable in the industrially more advanced nations. Nevertheless, there is a general tendency in the developing countries to be fascinated by technology and to attempt employment of the most up-to-date techniques for all kinds of products. These techniques have usually been developed in the industrially advanced nations and are mostly aimed at substituting equipment for labor because of rising wages. In the developing countries, capital intensive approaches are often identified with industrial progress and have a prestige value. In addition, equipment oriented production processes avoid the problems of more labor intensive manufacturing—wages, fringe benefits, facilities for employers, unions. These factors tend to operate against use of economically appropriate technology and the correct proportions of labor and capital equipment.

An economic approach to production argues for the conservation of capital, and the careful selection of products for local manufacture, as outlined in the above steps, only in such instances where the unit production costs are many times less than the prices of comparable products bought from abroad. Again this follows from the overriding issue of low demand in the foreseeable future and the need, in the developing nations, to utilize scarce capital resources wisely by manufacturing or purchasing high quality basic products that will last a number of years.

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- (6) WORLD COUNCIL FOR THE WELFARE OF THE BLIND, *Rehabilitation Services for the Blind in Developing Countries*. Paris, 1977.
- (7) WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION, *Prevention of Blindness*. Technical Report Series No. 518, General, 1973.
- (8) WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION, WHO Programme Advisory Group on the Prevention of Blindness. "Report of the First Meeting, Geneva, 19-22 February 1979." WHO/PBL/79.1.

## UNESCO/WCWB COOPERATION TOWARDS RE-PUBLICATION OF "WORLD BRAILLE USAGE"

Mrs. Helga Barraud, in charge of the Unesco Cooperative Action Programme, gave a brief description of the type of assistance projects jointly promoted by the WCWB and the Co-Action Programme. During 1978/79 over US \$45,000 worth of contributions were received from Co-Action partners in Belgium, Canada, France, Federal Republic of Germany, Japan, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom and the USA to assist institutes for the blind in the developing countries with the purchase of special equipment. Eighteen countries received aid under this project.

Mrs. Barraud referred to a ceremony that took place at Unesco in 1978 when the Director-General of Unesco was presented with a cheque for US \$25,000 donated by the Board of Directors of Gestetner Holdings Ltd., to be used for the publication of a new edition of the major reference work *World Braille Usage*. She appealed to all the WCWB member organizations represented to provide Unesco with their respective *braille* alphabets and any other materials which could be useful to the designated WCWB Braille consultant, Mr. W. B. L. Poole, formerly of the Royal National Institute for the Blind, London, England. The English language edition of the new *World Braille Usage* should be available early in 1981—UN International Year of the Disabled. Additional financial assistance would have to be sought to meet the costs of inkprint and braille editions of the manual in different languages.

Several participants expressed their appreciation of Unesco's work in favour of the visually handicapped and offered their Associations' support.

## PROFESSIONAL SESSION 10

### COOPERATION IN FULFILLING UNMET NEEDS

Wednesday morning, August 8, 1979

Chairman: Mr. Boris V. Zimin, USSR

### REPORT ON THE ACTIVITIES OF THE COMMITTEE ON SERVICES TO THE DEAF-BLIND

by Anders Arnör

As we meet today to hear about the activities of the Committee on Services to the Deaf-Blind during the five-year period just concluded, our thoughts naturally go to the late Dr. Richard Kinney who with such success led the work of this committee until the very day he died in March this year. I would like to quote our friend Eric Boulter who said in his obituary that "Richard Kinney through his brilliant mind, fluent pen and personal example became a well-known and highly respected personality and a powerful leader", not only within our committee but of all those who try to improve the conditions of the deaf-blind in the world. The loss we feel is a great one and his memory will forever live with us.

Significant of the spirit of his work is what he said himself upon his election at the General Assembly in São Paulo in 1974 as Chairman of the Committee on Services to the Deaf-Blind. "I accept this post with pleasure as a challenging opportunity to serve the committee".

His first task was to appoint the other members of his committee. It has during this period consisted of the following persons:

Mr. Suresh C. Ahuja, India  
Mr. Anders Arnör, Sweden  
Mr. Eric T. Boulter, United Kingdom  
Mr. Wally Christiansen, New Zealand  
Sheikh Abdullah M. Al-Ghanim, Saudi Arabia  
Dr. Gerritt van der Mey, Netherlands  
Mr. Ross C. Purse, Canada  
Dr. Edward J. Waterhouse, USA

Dr. Kinney also immediately took the initiative to implement the Resolution adopted by the São Paulo assembly on Action for the Deaf-Blind, a document which by the way very clearly reflected his personal thoughts and ideas. Thus, he created the following four sub-committees:

- The sub-committee on Known Populations, Existing Programs, Research
- The sub-committee on Unidentified Populations, Needed Programs, Research
- The sub-committee on Input from Organizations of the Deaf-Blind and Individuals
- The sub-committee on Helen Keller World Conference on Services to Deaf-Blind Adults

The plans for the historic First Helen Keller World Conference on Services to Deaf-Blind Youths and Adults were drafted at a meeting in London in June 1976, and the conference was held on September 11 to 16 the following year at the New York Statler Hilton Hotel. This conference has earned the reputation of being one of the best organized and most successful of the international conferences of WCWB. It was carried out in cooperation with the Helen Keller National Center for Deaf-Blind Youths and Adults, with the valuable financial support provided by the Social and Rehabilitation Administration of the United States' Department of Health, Education and Welfare. The theme of the conference was "The Deaf-Blind Person in the Community". Nearly 200 persons from 30 nations took part, and to our great satisfaction this number included many deaf-blind persons. Each session opened with the presentation of two papers, and this was followed by group discussions which later were summarized in reports written by the respective group chairmen. The conference participants also had the opportunity to make a highly interesting and well-organized full-day visit to the Helen Keller National Center for the Deaf-Blind on Long Island. The highlight of the conference was the adoption at the Closing Session of a Declaration on the Rights of the Deaf-Blind which has been given a very extensive distribution among governmental and non-governmental organizations all over the world. It is also included in the report which has been sent to all WCWB's member countries. It can still be obtained from WCWB's Headquarters in Paris, in ink print, large print, and a Braille version in English.

The Committee on Services to the Deaf-Blind decided at a meeting in Hanover, West Germany, in June 1978, to approach the United Nations Social and Economic Council, in order to have the Resolution on the Rights of the Deaf-Blind included and approved at the United Nations next General Assembly. I take greatest pleasure in informing you now that the Declaration will indeed be put before the UN General Assembly at its 34th session, as Item 79 on the Preliminary Agenda. The committee also discussed in Hanover the implementation of the Recommendations made by the Working Groups at the conference in New York in 1977. One of the tangible results of these recommendations is the Monography on Specific Aspects of Deaf-Blindness and Services to Deaf-Blind People which, thanks to the kind assistance of Dr. Edward Waterhouse, is available in print at this General Assembly.

A third and very important decision was made by the Committee, when it agreed to hold the Second International Helen Keller Conference during 1980 to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the birth



of Miss Keller. The Committee has kindly been invited by the representative from the Federal Republic of Germany to hold this conference in Hanover from Monday, July 21 to Friday, July 25, 1980. The conference theme will be "Responsible Independence for Deaf-Blind People". A few guidelines for the conference were drawn up at the last meeting, but the actual planning was referred to a Program Committee which will meet in Hanover at the end of August this year.

We certainly all feel that it was both an unnecessary and untimely whim of fate to take Dr. Richard Kinney from us while he was in the midst of his plans for the very important and great year of 1980. Let me therefore conclude my report by quoting what he wrote to me in his last letter dated January 1979:

"If we as deaf-blind people are accorded the opportunity to be responsible for our own community responsibility, then we have achieved a great deal towards transforming theoretical rights into practical realities".

## IDENTIFYING UNMET NEEDS IN CANADA

by Ross C. Purse, Managing Director  
Canadian National Institute for the Blind

It is a privilege for me to appear on this morning's program. I have been asked to report to you on the Unmet Needs of Blind Persons in my country, Canada. This task has been made relatively easy for me, since in 1975 and 1976, the Canadian National Institute for the Blind initiated a survey of Unmet Needs of Blind Canadians. I shall, therefore, review with you the results of that survey "Vision Canada", and I shall also indicate remedial steps that have been taken since its publication to improve conditions of blind persons and to prevent blindness.

### Background

On September 10, 1974, CNIB Management—with the approval of National Council (its policy-making body)—inaugurated the national survey of the unmet needs of blind Canadians. CNIB was successful in securing partial funding from the federal government Department of Health and Welfare. An experienced social work researcher, Professor Cyril Greenland, was engaged to design and direct the study. The director's first objective was to reach the blind people across Canada. A National Steering Committee, composed mainly of blind consumers from different walks of life and representative of 10 provinces and the Northwest Territories, was set up—15 people in all. A CNIB staff person was assigned to the Steering Committee in order to provide the Director with statistical information and other resource material.

The Committee members assisted in a program to reach blind persons in their home towns and to encourage them to speak up on the unmet needs as each saw them.

The Director and the CNIB staff person then travelled from coast to coast, holding weekend consultations with blind people. They heard views of blind persons, of deaf-blind persons, and multi-handicapped blind persons. Relatives and friends, CNIB volunteers and staff, outside educators, rehabilitation specialists, and government departments also took part in the consultations.

The study was not restricted to CNIB services. It was broad. It included many disciplines. It examined such services and programs as community responsibility, concessions, diagnostic services, education and training, employment, mechanical and technical aids, pre-school services, prevention of blindness, preservation and restoration of sight, public education, recreation programs, research, social services, transcription services, transportation, vocational rehabilitation.

The director and the steering committee also sought input from special groups and associations, inviting briefs and representation from The Canadian Council of the Blind (a nation-wide organization of the blind), from parents of blind children, blind parents, the elderly blind

at home and in institutions, student and youth groups, the war-blinded, educators, health and welfare agencies. Two thousand people, 80 per cent blind persons, responded by phone, by letters, and by informal briefs. Another 300 participated in the face-to-face consultations. The research and collection of information occupied the complete year of 1975.

### **The Report**

Under the title "Vision Canada", the resulting report contains 10 chapters with more than 50 major recommendations. The recommendations are directed to governments, to universities, other major organizations, and to CNIB. The report calls for a public commitment to assist visually impaired children. It states that many handicapped children are being neglected. The report documents that, in an affluent economy, the blind persons are economically disadvantaged. Adult blind persons, even when they are able to work and are self-supporting, are discriminated against in public places, housing and employment. The designers of cities, transportation systems, and public buildings have been quite oblivious to the presence and needs of handicapped people, including the blind and visually impaired. The report exhorts Canadian Press, the cooperative news-gathering agency, to provide a weekly digest of news and public affairs on cassette available through the mails or public libraries. It accuses the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation of scarcely recognizing the existence of the blind and recommends special programs on prime time on radio and on television. The report urges specific legislation to protect the legal rights of dog guide users. During the course of the survey many dog guide users asserted that they had been refused admittance to transportation systems, hotels and restaurants. The foregoing are samples of comments and recommendations directed to the community and to governments.

The report is critical also of CNIB and states, "In endeavouring to care for all the needs of blind people, CNIB tends to promise more than it or any groups can deliver". It claims that this CNIB approach is a disservice instead of a service, because it relieves the communities of their obligations and removes their responsibilities for blind citizens. To place the responsibilities where they belong, CNIB should extricate itself from as many direct services as possible and train personnel in government, education, and other outside organizations to provide needed programs and services. Also, CNIB should become a major resource in respect to blindness, for research, development and training for all the helping professions; specifically for education, social welfare, public health, medicine, science, and technology. A major point referred to throughout the survey is the need to include more blind consumers in the formation of services, since they no longer wish to be recipients only.

### **Another Report**

Following the publication of "Vision Canada" and in response to the identified very particular needs of deaf-blind Canadians, an even more specialized survey challenges our country to serve persons who are both

deaf and blind. I present here seven (7) of the twenty-eight (28) recommendations set out in this study:

1. A centre for deaf-blind services should be established which would be recognized as a source of information for all matters pertaining to the unique disability created by the combination of a visual and hearing loss.
2. Interpreters should be available for situations where that is the main need—such as attendance at a class, medical or other appointments and on-the-job training.
3. All specially adapted mechanical aids and appliances for deaf-blind persons should be made available. Arrangements for borrowing or buying these devices should be made on behalf of clients.
4. Courses in language, communication, personal and social management, independent living skills, pre-vocational and vocational training, and recreation planning should be developed particularly for deaf-blind participants.
5. Living accommodation should be made available that allows independence consistent with an individual's ability within a safe structure, such as: efficiencies in an institutional residence, rooms in private residences, or apartments in an apartment block.
6. Medical research should be encouraged to prevent this double handicap from occurring, and research and testing to develop special aids and devices for deaf-blind persons.
7. There should be government funding to allow for the coordinating of present resources, the development of expertise, the purchase of appropriate existing services, and the initiation of rehabilitation and training programmes specifically designed for deaf-blind citizens.

## Implementation

To determine the CNIB response to "Vision Canada", National Council set up an *ad hoc* committee, most of the members blind. For six months this committee studied the report and made 14 decisive recommendations to National Council. Because of the gigantic nature of this project and the almost revolutionary issues involved, implementation of recommendations will be related to priority needs and must be continuously monitored. To monitor and coordinate the implementation, the *ad hoc* committee was replaced by a Service Evaluation Committee. This eight-member committee—half of whom were blind persons—was composed of members of National Council, members of CNIB management and staff, and representatives from The Canadian Council of the Blind. The committee recognized that priority attention was already being given to strengthening the prevention of blindness programs, the library and transcription services, employment services, education and information services. The Service Evaluation Committee has now been superseded by a National Client Services and Professional Development Committee.



In conjunction with CNIB's eye service and prevention of blindness staff, the Canadian Ophthalmological Society and members of other medical and paramedical professional associations are now providing education through seminars, professional journals, and the media on the many facets of blindness prevention.

Libraries across the country are now placing on their shelves large print and talking books, many of the latter produced at CNIB.

The Canadian government is working with CNIB to open its employment services to blind job seekers, and CNIB is providing training to government personnel in order to teach them how to work with blind people. In 1978, CNIB's employment department, with funding from the federal government Department of the Secretary of State, completed an inventory of occupations in which blind persons were currently employed.

This catalogue was made available to our own CNIB employment counsellors and government employment agencies, high school guidance personnel, university and college counselling services, and vocational rehabilitation services for their use with blind and seriously visually impaired students and clients.

CNIB is currently conducting a survey on the number of blind persons in the employable age group 16-64 years in Canada—the number of employable unemployed in this group and the number of unemployable persons with reasons for unemployability.

Responding to the omnipresent cry for more and more instant communication and information, and for equality of rights, CNIB—through its Public Relations and Information Services, and with financial assistance from the Department of the Secretary of State—investigated several areas of Canadian laws as they affected the lives of blind persons. The project carried out by law students under the direction of a blind law student focused upon such matters as taxation, dog guide users rights, education rights, housing rights, building standards, and other concerns. At that time, the law students recognized that only three provinces in their Human Rights Legislation had enacted right of access to public places for dog guide users. Today, there are six.

In the area of recreation, CNIB has joined with three other national organizations in promoting integration of handicapped citizens into community programs.

Also, other bodies in other ways are responding to the report and to CNIB's advocacy efforts.

## **Analysis and Summary**

No matter how diverse were the target groups of these reports, the recommendations always had the same objective—the blind person's right to human dignity, to maximum independence, to social acceptance.

The studies are important for three major reasons: primarily, they analyse the status of blind and deaf-blind persons today and provide an assessment of prevention of blindness in Canada. They reproach the private sector and governments at all levels for the relative neglect of

visually handicapped Canadians in our society. The greatest significance of these reports, however, is their value for present and future development. They provide a blueprint for the building of new programming towards the integration of blind persons into the community and the removal of the poorest of them from the poverty level.

In my opinion, "Vision Canada" was a turning point in the history of CNIB. In its first 60 years, CNIB of necessity served as custodian, parent-provider, father-confessor, teacher, employer. The paternalistic role is no longer acceptable. Blind people today demand access with dignity to all public programs. Apart from responsibility for adjustment to blindness training, CNIB must serve as a catalyst rather than the provider of services, making programs in the community accessible to blind citizens.

The goal is essential services, needed training, greatly expanded social, medical, and technological research which will ensure to blind and deaf-blind persons the opportunity for fulfilled living.

## SPECIAL NEEDS OF BLIND WOMEN

by Mrs. Doris M. Anin, Director

Ghana Society for the Blind

### Belgrade Conference

Following the declaration of 1975 as the International Women's Year by the United Nations General Assembly, WCWB and IFB initiated the organization of the first International Conference on the Situation of Blind Women from November 18-20, 1975, in Belgrade, Yugoslavia, as part of the activities marking the Year.

The Union of the Blind of Yugoslavia, in cooperation with the Government of that Country, generously hosted the conference. A thirty-three member local committee led by a most charming lady, Mrs. Nada Zaric, made excellent arrangements for a wonderful hospitality for all the participants. There were 160 delegates from thirty countries, as well as a large number of associates and friends of the blind from all over the world.

The Programme Committee, drawn from WCWB and IFB, planned a most interesting and comprehensive programme which aroused very lively and frank discussions during the working sessions. There were five main working sessions devoted to:

- (i) The Status of Blind Women;
- (ii) The Blind Woman, her family and participation in the community;
- (iii) Access to education;
- (iv) Access to rehabilitation; and
- (v) Access to training and employment.

Papers presented on the status of blind women pointed out that due to lack of statistical information, it was not easy to assess the political, social, educational and economic situation of blind women. However, there were many blind women who occupy important positions in their communities in the fields of education, rehabilitation and welfare of the blind.

Attention was drawn to the differences in the situation of blind women in the industrialized countries, where opportunities exist for higher education, and where blind women were especially concerned about how to reach higher levels in their profession; and to the situation of blind women in developing countries, where due to prejudices, customs and ignorance, the blind woman is relegated to the position of an inferior being and an object of false pity and charity. The blind woman in such a setting is gradually brain-washed into accepting herself as a person with no rights or privileges to claim. She is therefore

concerned only with fighting for survival, and often has to do without the basic needs of food, clothing and shelter.

On participation in family and community life, there was enough evidence that great strides had been made by some blind women; as for example, the life of Mrs. Alma Murphey of St. Louis, USA—a totally blind woman married to a totally deaf and blind man, who had raised six children and is actively involved in community life.

Several papers were presented to show that there is reasonable access to education, rehabilitation, training and employment for blind women in the developed countries; though not much was said about the developing countries on these topics. However, there was still much room for improvement even in the developed countries; and at the closing session of the conference the following resolution was adopted:

*“Recognizing* that there are more than 16 million totally blind people in the world, that an even larger number are visually handicapped and that at least half of them are women and girls;

*Noting* with concern that more than 70 per cent of the world’s blindness is preventable;

*Aware* that despite the rapid advances made recently in the education, rehabilitation and employment of the blind, provision for blind women in most countries is non-existent;

*Noting* with emphatic approval the resolutions on the status of women made at the UN World Conference of International Women’s Year, Mexico June 1975;

*Affirming* that no statement of women’s rights can be comprehensive which does not take into account the special needs of separate groups including the blind and visually handicapped;

*Appreciating* the fact that blind women cannot exercise their rights as human beings without adequate provision for education, rehabilitation, employment and action to remove obstacles to their integration with Society;

#### THIS CONFERENCE

1. *Requests* all appropriate Specialized Agencies of the UN in considering and implementing programmes for the advancement of women, to make adequate provision for the particular needs of the blind and visually handicapped.
2. *Encourages* the International Research and Training Institute for the Promotion of Women, created by the UN World Conference of International Women’s Year, to include in its programme of study the situation of blind and visually handicapped women.
3. *Urges* all governments in programmes and plans for education, health, social security and family welfare to take special account of the needs of blind and visually handicapped women, to develop such plans with the expert help of the organizations of and for the blind and to implement them by the use of professionally trained personnel.



4. *Recommends* international and national blind welfare organizations to review the adequacy of their provision for blind and visually handicapped women and to ensure that a fair proportion of the resources available should be channelled into practical programmes designed to improve the education, rehabilitation, including the establishment of centres where they do not exist, employment, according to individual need, and the social status of women.
5. *Draws the attention* of governments and blind welfare organizations to the special needs of blind women who have additional handicaps.
6. *Encourages* national blind welfare organizations to take the initiative in the formation of national multi-disciplinary committees for the prevention of blindness.
7. *Invites* the appropriate Specialized Agencies of the UN and governments to undertake public information programmes by means of all mass communication media regarding the capacities of handicapped persons in terms compatible with human dignity.
8. *Exhorts* blind and visually handicapped women to participate actively in the attainment of these objectives through their organizations of and for the blind."

One thing stood out clearly throughout the conference: that the blind woman is not participating fully in the life of the community, especially in the developing countries where prejudices, customs and ignorance are great impediments to the blind woman's access to rehabilitation, training, employment and education. It was also clear that the simple human needs of food, clothing and shelter—often taken for granted by those in developed countries—are not available to many of the blind women in rural areas of the developing countries. There should, therefore, be greater cooperation among these countries, especially those in the same sub-region, in sharing experiences, working out plans, and initiating joint programmes which will provide at least these basic needs for the blind women in the rural and urban areas.

It is for these reasons that the Ghana Society for the Blind, once again, would like to recommend its Home Training Project for Blind Women (White Bonnet Scheme) to governments and sister organizations in the Third World. Our project, started in 1964, has proved quite successful, and has enabled thousands of blind women in rural and urban areas to participate in both family and community life.

### **The Welfare Assistant for the Blind and her Work**

With financial and technical assistance from the Royal Commonwealth Society for the Blind, sighted Ghanaian women are trained as itinerant Welfare Assistants for the Blind (WABs) and sent to the villages and towns to locate blind women and given them instruction in housewifery, childcare, cookery, personal hygiene and handicrafts.

Upon first arrival in a village, the WAB approaches the Chief and tells him the nature of her work. Almost invariably the Chief asks a villager to take the WAB round to show her the homes of the blind people in the village. Sometimes he calls a meeting of all the villagers and the WAB explains her work to them and asks them for the names of the blind people in the village. School children have been found to be very good in helping the WABs to locate blind people, therefore some WABs approach the headteacher of the local school when they first arrive in a village.

The WAB is not always welcomed by the blind and their relatives, but with tact and perseverance she wins the confidence of both. She then registers the blind woman, taking down as much information as is possible on a registration card which is forwarded to the headquarters for our records. In most cases the WAB re-teaches the blind women to do the things which they were doing before they became blind, such as sweeping, washing and cooking. After that, she teaches any of the crafts which are popular with our blind women, such as raffia lamp shades, stool seating with local ropes, rugs made with cuttings collected from garment factories and dress makers, and door mats. In addition to these, the blind women in the North and Upper Regions of Ghana do spinning, make ropes from fibre, and local earthenware pots. Several blind women help on farms and others shell groundnuts or palm kernels on contract.

When a blind woman becomes proficient in a particular craft, our Society supplies her with materials for work and the finished work is collected by the WAB for sale in our craft shop. Sometimes the WABs are able to sell the finished work locally. The blind woman is paid for work done as soon as it is collected from her. Many of our blind women are supplementing their family income in this way, and several others depend solely on this income for their living.

The WAB pays daily visits to the blind women on her register, making sure that each is visited at least once a month. Sometimes this is not possible since some WABs have as many as 98 blind women on their registers; but they all try their best to see each blind woman on their list at least once in two months.

The WAB keeps a daily account of her visits and activities, and during the last two working days of each month she reports to the local office of the Department of Social Welfare where she writes a detailed report of her activities for the month and her itinerary for the coming month. She sends the originals of these to the head office of the Society, and copies to her supervisor. At head office the Director studies these reports together with the reports of the two supervisors who go round to see that the WABs are doing their work properly. Comments on the work of the WABs are sent back to them, or the supervisors are asked to draw WAB's attention to particular points on their rounds.

*Finance:* Each WAB is given imprest each month, from which she pays for her travelling expenses while on duty, cost of materials for the blind women to work with, and sundries such as food, soap, etc. An

expense account showing expenditure for the month is sent to head office with the monthly report.

*Assistance from outside agencies:* The Royal Commonwealth Society for the Blind has supported this project since it was started. Apart from training the first batch of WABs, it gives an annual subvention towards the travelling expenses and subsidizes the salaries of the WABs. OXFAM provided, during the early days of the project, 12 bicycles for the WABs in Northern Ghana, a VW bus, and later a Landrover to replace it in 1973, for transporting materials to the blind and also to take the supervisor round to see that the WABs are doing their work properly.

Christoffel Blindenmission very kindly donated a VW bus to replace the Landrover in 1978; and has also made available DM 15,500 for the training of ten new WABs this year, to fill vacancies and to open three new stations.

All our Northern and Upper Region workers have received new bicycles to replace the very old ones from OXFAM. We received these bicycles from RCSB under the SHE Fund. We take this opportunity, once again, to express our sincere appreciation and thanks to all these agencies for their help and support.

## **Kiosk Project**

Following the success of our Home Training Scheme, and because of our Society's desire to make more blind women really independent, we launched a new settlement project which was intended for both women and men. Unfortunately we have not been able to interest any blind man in this project.

Under this project, the Society builds a kiosk usually in front of the blind person's house, so that she can call for help from relatives should it be necessary. The kiosk is then stocked with goods such as matches, candles, soap, salt, cigarettes, local cereals, groundnuts, ginger, pepper, etc. The selected person is presented with the kiosk and the goods and is expected to sell the goods, use the profits for her upkeep, and replenish the stocks with the capital. Our WABs assist the blind women to get fresh stocks, but in most cases members of the family help; with the WABs looking in from time to time too see that the kiosks are being operated smoothly.

The kiosks remain the property of our Society so that they can be transferred from one blind person to another. They are designed in a way to ward off thieves, and the blind person usually locks herself in. At the end of the day, stocks are removed for safe keeping in the house.

Twelve blind women have been successfully settled in this project. However, due to high cost of materials, the Society has not built any kiosks during the past two years; but has set up thirty more blind women in petty trading. The Society has bought for them items such as palm oil, charcoal, kerosene, maize, salt, etc. which they sell in their homes. Once it is known in the vicinity that a particular item is being sold at home by the blind woman, people in the neighbourhood prefer to buy from her rather than make the longer journey to the market.

## Conclusion

There were moves soon after the Belgrade conference to get the Ghana Society for the Blind to organize a course for Trainer/Supervisors from other countries who will go back to their own countries to start the Home Training Project. However, contacts made by RCSB to get participants for the course did not yield results.

The Ghana delegation wishes to reiterate that our Society will be willing to organize this course any time it is called upon to do so.

We also take this opportunity to invite Governments and sister organizations in the Third World to send people engaged in welfare work for the blind to Ghana to observe at first hand, how this project works in practice. It is our firm belief that it is only through cooperation and shared experiences that we can fulfil the unmet needs of the blind women in the Developing World!

Thank you.



# MEETING THE CHALLENGE OF MULTIPLE HANDICAP

by Dr. Franz Sonntag, Federal Republic of Germany

It is purely rhetorical to ask ourselves whether multiple handicapped blind persons can successfully cope with occupational employment, for who among us does not know of at least one blind person with additional multiple handicaps successfully meeting the demands placed upon him or her by a job or profession. Merely knowing about one or two individual cases, however, is not sufficient; on the contrary, it is vitally necessary to analyse the question carefully and systematically, for it is only in this way that we can finally arrive at some convincing answers. Without going into too much detail I would like to analyse the question with the aim of finding out just how multiple handicapped blind persons can be employed, what kind of jobs these are, and what aids and services are necessary. The 10th professional session shows us the necessity of close cooperation if we are to promote the vocational rehabilitation of multiple handicapped blind persons.

## I Terminology

I would like to begin by defining "multiple handicap". If we start with the premise that blindness is the basic affection, then multiple handicap must mean that a further handicap is present which in itself would mean at least a 50 per cent disablement. When talking about "occupational rehabilitation" I mean every kind of work relief, no matter whether a person blinded later in life is to be retrained or whether a person who is blind from birth is to be trained for a job for the first time.

Later examples refer to cases known in the Federal Republic of Germany.

## II Groups of multiple handicapped blind persons

The systematic approach to this problem requires the definition of typical groups of multiple handicapped blind persons. Such a definition confines itself to those groups of blind people stricken by a particularly serious additional handicap; additional, that is, to blindness itself. This analysis gives us the following six groups:

- (1) Blind persons who are also deaf (blind-deaf).
- (2) Blind persons with impaired hearing or who are almost completely deaf.
- (3) Blind persons without hands or arms.
- (4) Blind persons without a hand or an arm.
- (5) Blind persons with additional severe impairments to health (heart diseases, metabolic diseases, paralysis, etc.).
- (6) Blind persons with severe mental disturbances.

### III Possibilities of occupational rehabilitation for multiple handicapped blind persons

The following is intended to show the possibilities offered by the occupational rehabilitation of the multiple handicapped blind. This presentation will refer to examples and necessary aids and services whenever they are needed. The occupational possibilities for handicapped groups as under II are limited to the following characteristic features:

(1) *Deaf-blind* persons are able to complete a university or technical college course of study and subsequently enter a profession, e.g., become a lawyer, judiciary or civil servant. A remarkable case in point is that of a deaf-blind man who studied jurisprudence with the aid of his wife. Today he is a scientific adviser in the higher public service of one of our cities. This deaf-blind person requires the aid of a permanent assistant who communicates the contents of dossiers, legislation and ordinances to him by means of dactylogy (Niessen system). He dictates all reports, opinions and decisions himself. He does this by reading the statute books in Braille and using a Braille typewriter.

Deaf-blind people are often successful physiotherapists. There are even cases of deaf-blind persons having their own private practice or being employed in a hospital. In each of these cases he must be aided by an assistant or a colleague who must establish the necessary contact with the patients.

Some deaf-blind persons have made a commercial success in wood-working following attendance at several rehabilitation courses. Their workshops are fitted out according to their individual requirements. Among the products they make are wooden bowls, candlesticks, wooden boxes, etc. These are sold to private persons or organizations.

Until quite recently deaf-blind persons were also employed as typists. They typed standard letters inserting address, details and facts. These particular features had to be initially noted by the deaf-blind person in Braille. But with the introduction of type-controlled typing machines this type of job went out of existence.

It should also be possible to employ deaf-blind persons as industrial workers or homeworkers. In such cases a contact person is necessary to supervise the working process itself and accept orders.

(2) *Blind persons with impaired hearing or who are almost completely deaf* can, of course, carry out all the occupational activities mentioned in (1). An impressive example of occupational intelligence is the case of an almost completely deaf-blind person who works in his own office as an annuity councillor. He is the intellectual head of his office knowing as he does all the relevant legislation and legal judgements, also appearing before the social courts. He employs several office staff members who deal with the necessary preliminary work. The essential decisions, however, are made by the almost completely deaf-blind man himself. His most important aids are the telephone amplifier and a wireless transmitter-receiver apparatus (Sennheiser Mikroport) intended to facilitate communication in a room or shall over any required distance.

(3) *Blind persons without hands or arms* are active in higher public service or as experts employed by public authorities. Their professional accomplishments in these capacities are convincing. In many cases, blind persons belonging to this group are employed as inquiry clerks or janitors by the public authorities. One of them is employed by the Federal State Railways to announce the arrival and departure of trains over the station loudspeaker system. Important aids for this group of multiple-handicapped blind persons are electronic dictating machines and cassette recorders.

One blind person without hands is employed on the switchboard of a sanatorium. He operates the complete telephone system with its five direct exchange lines and 200 substations, as well as a calling system for the entire sanatorium without help. To employ him as switchboard operator the main department of welfare had to install a special switchboard table. All incoming calls are put through to the substations by means of 17 keys of varying heights. Outgoing calls are made in the same way. The system is controlled by a small computer which also registers the telephone charges. The installation of this switchboard cost DM 220,000.

Earlier, blind persons without hands or arms were employed to plait mats or to make clothes-pegs. Today, these occupations are no longer required.

(4) *Blind persons without a hand or an arm* can, of course, carry out all kinds of occupations mainly requiring brainwork. The only problems being their employment in the industrial sector or the pursuit of handicraft activities. Experience shows us that blind persons lacking a hand or an arm can indeed be employed in industrial and handicraft jobs providing they are not too complicated and that their workplaces have been properly equipped. The proper equipping of a workplace should ideally be carried out together with industrial engineers and factory inspection engineers.

(5) *Blind persons with additional severe impairments to health (heart diseases, metabolic diseases, paralysis, etc.)* can be employed in most occupations requiring brainwork as well as in industry, commerce and crafts after taking their individual situation into account. Their states of health should be taken into consideration, as well as working hours, work load and difficulties involved in the job they have to perform. Industrial engineers and works doctors or consultants advising the works administration should cooperate.

(6) *Blind persons with severe mental disturbances* can only be employed to a limited degree. They cannot be considered for incorporation into the general working process. There are, however, possibilities of occupying them in therapeutic workshops. Their achievements should not be compared to normal working standards. The therapeutic workshops must guarantee medical, remedial gymnastic and usually neurological care. It must be realized that blind children with mental disturbances often suffer from seizures. Experience gathered in the Federal Republic points to blind persons with severe mental disturbances being

able to achieve a mere 10 to 20 per cent of the normal work standard of a healthy worker. Attempts to employ such blind persons to carry out simple repetitive jobs on the assembly line offer some hope of success.

#### **IV Summary**

The rehabilitation of multiple handicapped blind persons is difficult demanding as it does specialized knowledge in the fields of blind psychology, technology, work organization and occupational medicine. In more problematical cases specialist teachers, engineers and doctors must work together. Special attention should be paid to the workplace itself. All work processes must be completely comprehensible and logical, and thought through to the smallest detail. Each workplace must be fitted out with suitable appliances for the blind. The problem of protection against accidents is of great importance. For blind persons with extremely severe additional impairments preventing controlled work, an occupation has to be found that has at least a limited economic result in addition to the occupational therapy itself. Industrial nations must begin paying more attention to the problem of the occupational rehabilitation of the multiple handicapped blind. Developing countries should also show an interest in these problems so that they can avoid mistakes from the very onset.

Reasonable results can only be achieved by cooperation between all the institutions and organizations involved in the problem in any way at all. Finally, it should be mentioned that the ERC of the WCWB is holding a special congress in the Federal Republic of Germany in 1981 on the occupational and social rehabilitation of multiple handicapped blind persons.



## **PROFESSIONAL SESSION 11**

### **COOPERATION IN DEVELOPING LEADERSHIP**

Wednesday afternoon, August 8, 1979

Chairman: Dr. Robert Winn, USA

#### **THE DEVELOPMENT OF LEADERSHIP IN THE FIELD OF WORK FOR THE BLIND IN THE 80's**

by Robert J. Winn, Jr., Ph.D.

Director, Bureau for Blind and Visually Handicapped, Rehabilitation  
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Leadership is probably one of the most important ingredients in the development of any major system in our modern day society. In fact, leadership itself has brought about all of the benefits accruing to our modern day society and also its potential destructiveness. Ancient societies have risen and fallen on the basis of the type of leadership provided. There are obviously many political scientists today that feel our present society will continue at its developmental rate or without proper leadership be destroyed.

The objective of this paper is not to deal with leadership as it shapes our total society, but the scope of this paper is to deal with leadership as it affects a subsystem within our present day world society. This paper will deal specifically with the development of leadership in the field of services for blind individuals. The strategies presented here will be highly significant if we are to make continued progress in the decade of the 80's.

The strategies which I am proposing will not just deal with the development of leadership in the United States, the leadership in France, or the leadership in Nigeria. It will deal with basic principles that are important for whenever leadership must be developed throughout the world. The manner or specific way in which these strategies are applied will differ somewhat from country to country. However, the basic principles of these strategies will hold true irrespective of the culture. Hopefully, these strategies will assist those countries which have a more highly developed service delivery system for blind persons. On the other hand, these principles should also assist those countries that are struggling with the initial evolution of services for blind individuals. Finally, the principles which are delineated in this paper allow those countries who are in the early process of evolving services

to develop such services in relationship to their religious and social beliefs. Mere superimposing of Western technology and specific methodology and evolving countries is not the aim of this paper. It is, however, the purpose of this writer to lay out strategies to assist leaders in each country to develop their own pattern of services relative to the needs of their population.

In order for there to be leadership, obviously there must be a leader. This paper is not so ambitious as to take on the task of developing a leader. For if we are to develop a leader, we must start at conception and follow the child throughout its early developmental stages. There are many personality traits that a leader must possess. Many of these personality characteristics evolve at a very young age.

In order to be a leader one must have charisma, one must have the ability to mesmerize others, one must have the ability to lead others as a magnet draws iron filings to its surface. The leader must have credibility. Sometimes we refer to this as a face validity. They must also possess the personality trait of tenacity. A leader must never be willing to give up for he or she realizes that the differences between winners and losers are those who fight the battle until it is won. They must have true dedication to causes, dedication which will inspire others. Personality characteristics are only the beginning of a list that one could derive. Needless to say, throughout the world in each of our respective countries, there are persons who possess certain of these characteristics and thus having a potential of being true leaders in a classical sense.

In addition to those personality characteristics that are heavily related to one's environment and interaction with one's environment, there are also bio-physical genetic inherited characteristics. Leaders are usually more intelligent. The type of intelligence is broad in scope. A leader is a divergent thinker, a conceptualizer, a problem solver. Another important physiological characteristic is what we refer to in our modern physiology as a possessor of high energy level. Let it be noted that many of the great leaders of our world are persons who have almost boundless energy, persons who can work long hours at a high output of creativity. It is not the ambition of this paper to involve itself in genetic engineering in order to develop leaders. It is needless to say that throughout the world in each of our various countries, there are persons who possess these basic genetic characteristics.

Although there may be persons in your country and my country who possess the precise personality traits and genetic characteristics to enable them to be potential leaders, they may never reach their potential. In order to assist those persons in the world who are potential leaders in realizing their potentiality, the writer would pose that we should carefully examine four important strategies which will assist those persons in reaching their potential as leaders in improving services for blind persons throughout the world.

The first strategy is to assist potential leaders in developing their marketing skills. Technically, highly evolved countries use attitudinal studies, mass media, etc. to accomplish this. Even in countries with less technology, one would say that a shopkeeper bartering a local farmer at the market employs marketing skills relative to his cultural environ-

ment. Why are marketing skills so essential? The leader must be able to sell his concepts to those important persons in his or her society—a concept that blind people are capable productive individuals who have the competencies and abilities to contribute to their society, not to live upon it.

Whether or not the leader is blind or sighted, they must basically believe in blind persons. They must believe that blind persons have the ability to succeed in their society. This is a straightforward simplistic concept, however, it is a most difficult concept to develop. As an example, those highly skilled marketing experts in the higher technologically developed countries have attacked the marketing of handicapped persons in a most scientific manner. A manner which is basically contrary to the principle of a belief in the competencies of blind persons. One of the most prolifically used advertisements for hiring people in the United States is “Hire the handicapped, they’ll never miss a day’s work and after you train them, you will never have to train them again and they will also be loyal to you.” This kind of advertisement in marketing the skills of handicapped people is atrocious. It essentially says that handicapped, blind, deaf, cerebral palsied, etc. needs employability so pathetically bad that they’re almost willing to take any job and secondly, after they are employed, you don’t have to worry because they will be so grateful they will not attempt to move up in the system or either they do not have the ability to move up in the system and, therefore, you will not have to retrain them. This exemplifies a marketing technique used in a highly evolved country like the United States of America which is obviously misselling the capability of blind persons.

The writer will not attempt in detail to delineate the complete technology of marketing skills but would point out one basic principle and that is that there are two basic dimensions for selling the society in which you or I live that blind people are capable and productive individuals. The first dimension is that of basic attitudinal dimension of for or against or positive or negative. There has been much research in American journals relative to attitudinal studies towards handicapped persons and particularly blind persons. We find that, for example, where school children have never been in class with or played with blind children, they tend to highly underestimate what blind children can do. On the other hand, those normal children that have attended class with blind children tend to be more realistic and positive about what blind children can and cannot do. Thus, educating the public is an important issue but the writer must point out that merely talking about blind persons and their attributes is not as potent as the actual positive interaction between blind persons and normal persons in the society. The leader in the field of the blind feels that a positive integration of blind persons in the society who are successful will change attitudes of the normal. Even in India where a blind person may be given a herd of water buffalo has a rehabilitation methodology. The family and friends of this person will look up to this person as being successful in their society.

The second dimension goes beyond merely being for or against, positive or negative towards an idea or towards persons. This has to do



with what is known as potency. I may feel very strongly for a certain candidate in election, but if I do not vote for that individual, the attitude which I maintain has no potency. Looking at shaping the attitudes of society, we must not only look at just educating society, but we must look at those basic strategies to get society to take action to buy blind persons as successful individuals. We must enroll those normal people into the fight and cause for improving services for blind individuals.

The writer would impose that it is crucially important to delineate the marketing strategies in each country of the world which are crucial and important to the society or environment. We must cooperatively share our observations and our marketing technology with one another. Certain principles can be shared across societies and certain principles may be quite unique for a specific society.

The second strategy that we must employ is that of assisting potential leaders in the field of blind persons in knowing about services for blind individuals throughout the world. We know a leader may have never been a teacher for the blind, a rehabilitation counselor for the blind, a rehabilitation teacher for the blind, a mobility instructor for the blind, etc., he or she must have some basic understanding of such service modalities. Particularly, the leader must have some concept of what is or what is not quality services in the respective country involved. It is far worse, I feel, in certain cases to develop poor inadequate low quality services than it is to have no services. Once inadequate services are developed, it is usually the contention of the political power base or governmental power base that as services are rendered a commitment to services for blind persons has been made. In many cases, it is very difficult to change such services once they're established. Looking at a quality control system, there must be an understanding relative to standards in programs and secondly relative to standards for professionals serving in those programs. There are obviously a variety of methodologies that can be employed to implement such standards.

A second important aspect in developing a basic information base concerning programs for potential leaders for blind persons is that of program utilization. To some of the readers of this paper who live in countries who have less resources with less evolved services for blind persons this will appear to be a puzzling statement. However, you can profit from the mistakes of the low resource countries who have developed a more highly evolved service for blind individuals. In the United States, there is considerable evidence that there is a lack of program utilization. In certain states, there may be two rehabilitation centers both of which are not fully utilized. There may be states with very little services who are adjacent to other states with rehabilitation centers which are under utilized. There are cases of developing two or more service systems to serve the same population, each system competing with the others. The potential leader must have adequate programmatic knowledge and concepts of programs to utilize all services available for the rehabilitation of blind persons.

The third strategy is that of the development of management skills for the potential leaders in the field of work for blind persons. There



are many management techniques which have been used to conduct service programs. A few examples are: Program Planning Budget System, better known as PPBS, Management By Objectives, better known as MBO, etc. One should not get so involved in one management system that aspects of other management systems would be lost. Whatever the technique used, it should be the most efficient system for utilizing existing services.

The most recent concept in the management of human services is that of the systems approach. This transcends the specific management technique. A systems approach is where all aspects of the service delivery system are analysed as to proper linkages. A chain is no stronger than its weakest link. As an example, in the United States millions of dollars have been spent on technology and its development. In certain cases, nothing has been spent on training people to use this technology nor has there been government subsidy to assist blind people in purchasing such expensive technology. Truly, the chain is no stronger than its weakest link. There is no wonder that much of our advanced technology in the Western world has not been employed relative to its potential.

Finally, no matter which management technique is used the concept of goals setting and planning is paramount to any system of management. It is crucial to know where one is going in the future and secondly, how one is going to get there. Often, as one looks at the history of great leaders in the field of the blind, one finds that leader may have had a specific interest in one program aspect or the person may have been interested in developing the teaching methodology or technology up to a point but not all the way. The future leaders in the 80's must look at what the goals are and what the systems approach should be in carrying out and reaching those goals.

The final strategy which this paper wishes to address is that of assisting future leaders in the field of work for blind persons to utilize change agent technology. As indicated earlier, in marketing skills, it is not merely enough to educate or to inform the key role for leaders of the 80's to make change in the system. The system might be the political service delivery system, the governmental system, the business and industrial system, etc. One of the first basic principles in change agent theory is to know the system that one is dealing with. If one knows the system, one can eventually predict what the system will do relative to a given stimulus. If one is able to predict what is relative to a given stimulus, one then is in a position to manipulate the system. The second basic principle is that one must develop very carefully a blue print exclusively designed to change the system. It is not merely goal-oriented but is primarily strategy-oriented. What are the strategies? In looking at strategies, it is important to understand that to achieve any change in a system, it takes a multiplicity of strategies.

Eight months ago I met with all of the State directors of the 50 states in the United States, as well as other Federal districts. We began training into what is known as strategic management. Strategic management was derived from the military. It is highly change-oriented. More importantly, it is survival-oriented. With world shortages of energy,

and high unemployment in many countries, we must look at the issue of survival—survival of the services that we have developed already as well as the need for future services in order for blind persons to survive in a more highly developed technological society that is evolving in most countries. A leader in services for blind persons in the 80's must carry on the work of those capable competent leaders in the past. In doing so, the leaders in the 80's must take an exceptional aggressive and survival-oriented approach, a strategic management approach.

The purpose of this paper has been to attempt to deal with strategies to improve potential leaders in the field of work for the blind persons in the 80's. There has been an attempt to provide strategies that will be useful to leaders in all countries. These strategies could not be laid out in their total technological framework within the scope of this paper, but should each be further delineated in an entire paper oriented to each strategy. The four strategies have been developing marketing skills, providing important program information, developing management skills, and developing change agent skills. This paper has made the assumption that within each country of the world, there are individuals who possess the precise personality and bio-chemical characteristics necessary for potential leaders. On the other hand, this paper has attempted to make clear that such potentiality will not be realized in the next decade if we do not take a more sophisticated and comprehensive approach in training and developing leadership in the field of work for blind persons which will assist more individuals in realizing their potential as leaders in their respective countries. The writer appreciates the opportunity of having shared these ideas with those interested persons who serve in the field of work for blind persons.

## **“LEADERSHIP IN THE AREA OF THE BLIND”**

by Monsur Ahmed Choudhur<sup>1</sup>, Executive Officer  
Bangladesh National Society for the Blind

### **Acknowledgement**

I feel deeply honoured by the invitation of the Programme Committee of the World Council for the Welfare of the Blind to present a paper in the World Assembly on “Leadership in the area of the Blind”. I am grateful to the Programme Committee for giving me a chance to speak in the world forum.

Due to shortage of time, it was not possible to collect more information and make revisions. I admit there are shortcomings in my paper, which, I believe, the participants will accept with their magnanimity, and open discussion on the paper will remove all doubts from their minds.

This afternoon I am going to discuss about a topic which is crucial, debatable and most essential in all context of human society across the globe from the dawn of civilization.

I trust the World Assembly will find some interest in my paper and will consider the same favourably, and will agree with my recommendations for implementation for the cause of the blind of the developing countries.

### **Definition of Leadership**

Leadership can be defined in more than one way. In the broadest sense of the term, “Leadership refers to that process whereby an individual directs, guides, influences or controls the thoughts, feelings, aspirations and behaviour of other human beings”, observes Dr. Franklyn S. Haiman in his book “Group Leadership and Democratic Action”. Prof. Patrick M. Williams in his book “Leadership and Organization Development” of San José State College in the United States defined Leadership as “inducing others to be what they might otherwise not be”. According to him, for Leadership to occur, we need at least two people—an inducer (initiator) and one who is induced to change (reactor). Here the initiator will plan, direct and guide and the actions of the reactor shall bring in the desired change.

Mr. Irving Knickerbocker in his article “Leadership: A Conception and some implications” published in *The Study of Leadership* has described leadership as one which “emerges as a consequence of the needs of a group of people and of the nature of the situation within which that group is attempting to operate”. To quote Field-Marshal Montgomery on Leadership from his book *The Path to Leadership*, is “The capacity and the will to rally men and women to a common purpose, and the character which will inspire confidence”.

From the foregoing it is seen that Leadership has a wide-ranging meaning. We may safely conclude that Leadership is a word which implies truth, character, sincere effort, humane qualities and a capability to read the minds of followers and act according to the wishes of the majority to achieve the objectives of that particular group.

### Styles of Leadership

There are basically four styles of leadership; namely Authoritarian, Strict Supervisory, Democratic or cooperative, and Non-directive. Let me discuss them one by one:

- (a) *Authoritarian*: This style makes the leader absolute in decision-making. He seems to care little about his followers from whom he derives his power. He decides what is right and what is wrong. The authoritarian leader understands his role to be one of domination, and his followers are expected to play the role of subordinates. He refuses to share leadership with others. He will always insist that his ideas are the best and always correct. By doing so, the authoritarian leader, or autocrat, directs the behaviour of other fellow associates towards his predetermined ends. Their methods are dubious although they may give the appearance of democratic procedures. This style clearly implies that the leader is regarded as superior to his followers. To quote Machiavelli, "one ought to be both feared and loved" to be a successful authoritarian leader; which means the leader has to play the game of fear and love.
- (b) *Strict supervisory*: This represents a milder form of autocracy. This type of leader is more considerate and friendly to his followers. Since he wishes to promote efficiency, the strict supervisory leader depends wholly on giving orders, leaving aside his associates from decision-making. Like an authoritarian leader, he considers himself as more capable than the participants of his group. He presupposes that the sharing of responsibility with his associates is unnecessary and unwise. So we find that initiative and interdependency in this form of leadership is restricted within the leader. He will dominate to drive his point home but will not allow his supporters to make suggestions since he believes this is a sheer waste of time.
- (c) *Democratic or cooperative leadership*: Democracy is a word which means all things to all men. The democratic leader guides and coordinates the group's decision-making process. He can be termed a discussion leader or Chairman of debate whose main purpose is to preserve and enhance democratic procedures. He considers himself as one of his followers and shares the responsibility of decision-making along with all members of his group. The democratic leader has an affirmative approach to problems, and to participants in a discussion. The democratic leader believes that intra-group communications are very important and all the members of the group should be given a fair chance to speak, give their views on personal initiative, and thus



they can contribute to the well-being of the group as a whole. The democratic or cooperative leadership gives equal opportunity to the members of the group.

- (d) *Non-directive leadership*: This type of leader usually invites the group members to suggest the phase of the problem to be considered. In other words, he does not want to participate in decision making. The non-directive leader can be called democratic but he is less likely to perform procedural duties for the group. Though he can manage and accomplish the same ends as democratic leaders, he does so in a more indirect manner. In this form, the leader gets things done, the group acts and the leader's procedural influence is held to the minimum. This is due to the fact that the individual of the group has the required capacity to understand his problem and to solve them.

### **Approach of Leadership**

Approaches of leadership are multifarious in nature. Let me explain some of the salient features:

- (a) *Intelligence*: This quality is vital towards the attainment of leadership. This is essential since one has to understand the problem and study it, so that he can have a thorough grasp of the situation and can give a correct solution for the same.
- (b) *Truth*: It plays a vital role in the achievement of a leader. He must have a frank mind and discuss the problems with his followers with an open heart since they must believe in him.
- (c) *Character*: The leader must possess an unblemished character since this will create confidence in the mind of his followers. Only character can inspire others to follow him.
- (d) *Strong determination*: The leader shall essentially be of strong determination, without which he cannot achieve the goal for which his followers have given their confidence. The willpower of the leader acts like a tonic for the whole group.
- (e) *Optimism*: Successful leaders should have a greater amount of optimism for the desired goal: coupled with a strong determination, they can achieve success against all the barriers.
- (f) *Judgement*: He must have sound judgement, in which others can have confidence, and a good knowledge of human nature. His judgement should be based on the totality of his group.
- (g) *Choice*: A leader must be a good judge of men, a good selector of subordinates—because it is they who will preserve the philosophy of the leader and shall carry the message of the leader.

### **Leadership in the Developed Countries**

Leadership in the developed countries has made much headway. This has been possible mainly due to two factors: their industrial growth resulting in economic emancipation of the people, and secondly the social status of an individual in those countries. The majority are

aware of their duties and responsibilities, and their rights and privileges. A majority of the people have education. The people can think about their future, and play a vital role in their social pattern of life in their respective nations. Accordingly, they rally round the leader of their own choice. They have freedom of speech and right of criticism. The press highlights the views and goals of leaders and thereby helps to mould public opinion. In the developed countries, the leaders have to exert themselves with all their sincerity, initiative and human virtues to win over the hearts of the majority.

### **Leadership in the Developing Countries**

Leadership in the developing countries is a herculean task. The general economic condition of the people is not satisfactory, and the Governmental resources are also very limited. Since the bulk of the population are deprived of education—they are not aware of their own problems, and consequently they have to believe in the popularity and charismatic quality of a leader. The inevitable result is that the leaders often fail to make good their promises. Public opinion is also not very effective, and hence the leaders can confuse their followers. Since the democratic rights of the people are also very much restricted, or practised on a much lesser scale, the leaders try to mislead the people for their own selfish ends. Absence of democratic values in some of these countries hinders the growth of able leadership. The conflict between traditional leadership and the modern socio-political behaviour of the majority is always there in the developing countries.

### **Leadership in the Area of the Blind**

May I have the privilege to draw your attention to the subject of leadership in the area of the blind in the light of the earlier deliberations.

- (a) Leadership in the area of the blind in the developed countries has met with success due to the reason that they could appreciate the problems of the blind. These countries could provide facilities for the education and employment of the blind. Such as, there is no dearth of educational appliances, equipment and resources for the betterment of their future. But the condition in the developing countries is reversed. This is due to the fact that the resources of these countries are very limited and are not readily available. The lack of these vital educational kits, appliances and equipment, coupled with major financial problems, poses a stumbling block towards the attainment of an education of the blind in the developing countries.
- (b) The people of the developed countries have a tremendous amount of social awareness; public attitude towards the blind is also very favourable. The people of the developed countries have a certain sense of responsibility towards the fellow blind citizen of the country. They have a sense of respect for the physically handicapped. Over and above, there is usually no shortage of resources from the national treasury. But in the

developing countries, very few people recognize their duties and responsibilities towards their fellow blind citizens—the great majority of the population is not aware, and maintains an indifferent attitude towards them. Frankly speaking, the developing countries face an acute unemployment problem for the sighted educated people; not to speak of employment opportunities for the blind. The state resources are also very much limited.

- (c) Besides, in the developed countries, the formation and development of organizations, both for and of the blind, have contributed much towards the growth of leadership in the area of the blind. In those countries, there is ample scope for the educated blind to be associated with any of the organizations, serve there, and think about the needs and aspirations of the blind community of the world. On the contrary, such organizations are relatively lesser in the developing countries, and the educated blind is deprived of practising leadership, although there are few exceptions. The emergence of developed organizations, both for and of the blind, flourishing in the western world offer excellent opportunity to the potential blind to practise leadership. Such situations encourage blind leaders even to attain international reputation, both for the work connected with blind and in his individual profession.
- (d) In the developing countries, the need for development of the blind community has not yet received priority. In the national plans and policies, the respective Governments of the developing countries do not attach the required priority for the systematic growth and development of the blind community—their needs and aspirations; like other sectors of the society. Whereas, in the developed countries, the respective Governments give due consideration in this regard keeping in line with the development of other sectors in the society.
- (e) Over-protection or under-protection of a blind person in his family hinders the growth of self-confidence. In the developing countries the blind child usually does not get the same treatment and affection from his parents like his other sighted brothers and sisters in the family. This attitude of the family causes a psychological set-back for the blind and hence his mental faculty cannot grow, and he prefers to remain in seclusion, and considers himself as a burden in the family. But in the developed countries, a blind child is recognized as an equal member of the family and the attention of the parents is also equal towards all the children, including the blind one.

### **My Observations about Growth of Leadership of the Blind in Bangladesh vis-a-vis my experience in Asia and Overseas**

Bangladesh with a population of eighty million and having an area of fifty-five thousand square miles, belongs to the developing world. The country is besieged with the serious problem of blindness—both

preventive and curable and socio-economic rehabilitation of the blind.

The Rotary Club of Dacca established a school for the blind in 1957 in Dacca in the erstwhile East Pakistan, now Bangladesh. This step was the land-mark for the well-being of the blind, which encouraged the Government to include the programme for the education of the blind in its second five-year plan and set up four more residential schools of primary level during the years 1960–65. Since the independence of Bangladesh in 1971, the Government attached much importance for the education of the blind under the integrated programme and by 1973 expanded the facility to 47 schools throughout Bangladesh.

In 1964 an organization developed for the first time by a few blind students along with sighted friends called East Pakistan Federation of the Blind, now renamed as National Federation of the Blind. Incidentally I was associated with this organization. This endeavour encouraged many members of the public to come forward and share the work for the welfare of the blind in subsequent years.

In 1970, another organization called East Pakistan Society for the Blind was established by some noted sighted social workers along with the blind, which after the independence of Bangladesh, was renamed and reorganized as the Bangladesh National Society for the Blind. This organization received the due recognition of the Government and affiliation to the World Council for the Welfare of the Blind in 1973.

During the past 15 years the creation and development of the organizations, both of and for the blind in Bangladesh, offered an opportunity to some of the blind to assume leadership and subsequently efforts are being taken to develop us.

My participation in the World Convention of the Blind, South East Asian Blind Leadership Seminar and International Symposium on Problems of Sports for the Blind, in 1969 in Colombo, 1975 in Kuala Lumpur and 1979 in Belgrade respectively, have enabled me to exchange views and ideas on services for the blind. This has given me self-confidence and familiarized me with the activities of the developed world. Though I personally feel that the entire experience of success in the western world cannot be transformed in the eastern society, still there is ample opportunity to narrow down the gap by implementing the programme in the developing world for the blind within their own local socio-economic context.

### **Recommendations for Growth of Blind Leadership**

- (a) Ignorance of the majority about their responsibilities and duties towards the blind must be removed. This can only be done through public awareness, through television, radio and press, as well as by films, of the activities of the blind.
- (b) Educational equipment, kits and appliances for the education of the blind must be made easily available in all the developing countries. About 75 per cent of the total blind population of the world lives in the developing countries, where the essential equipment for their study is not ready at hand for them.



- (c) There should be an improvement in the level of education of the blind. Education of the blind up to the level of a school final examination should be enforced strictly. Only meritorious and potential blind leaders should be sponsored for higher education, which will be meaningful for their future lives.
- (d) The respective countries of the developing world should recognize the blind and their problems. In the national policies, the problems of the blind should be given priority.
- (e) The blind in the developing countries have no security of life (i.e. employment opportunity and facilities and training). The avenues of employment are very scarce and the majority of blind manpower is going to waste since there are only a few training institutes with limited capacity. It is a fact that a blind person cannot work without any training. This has resulted in the unemployment of a large number of blind people and, on the other hand, a large portion of manpower is being wasted, which affects the economy of the country. Hence, the sense of insecurity and frustration in the minds of blind people have to be removed.
- (f) Organizations, both of and for the blind, should be formed and developed in all the countries of the developing world. All these organizations should formulate projects for the welfare of the blind, and work in close liaison with the respective Governments, so that efforts can be doubled by all concerned, and leadership can grow in the area of the blind.
- (g) Periodical national and regional seminars and conferences should be held on blind leadership training, sponsored by the organizations, both of and for the blind, of the participating countries and Regional Committees keeping in line with the blind leadership training seminars held in Kuala Lumpur and Lusaka in 1975 and 1979 respectively. Participants of such training seminars should be selected from such blind having the potential qualities of a leader in the area of the blind.
- (h) A Federation of Blind Graduates Alumni should be initiated, in order that the problems of the educated blind and their future can be discussed under the aegis of the said Federation, and the outcome of such discussions be given to those who are involved in the rehabilitation of the blind. This recommendation was, however, made by Mr. Ron Chandran Dudley, in the fourth Asian Conference on Work for the Blind at Bombay, India in 1973 in his article "The Educated Blind in Asia—Their Problems, Needs and Employment Prospects".
- (i) WCWB should take the initiative and necessary steps towards inclusion in the charter of 80's to be adopted by Rehabilitation International in Winnipeg, Canada, in the next year to draw the attention of the international community, Government and non-Governmental organizations of the respective countries for growth of leadership of the blind, with priority, in the coming decade.

## Conclusion

My attempt in this paper was to put forward the hard facts which are standing in the way of the growth of potential leaders in the area of the blind in the developing countries. The achievements in this regard in the western world are simply tremendous, but have had less influence in the developing countries. One must admit that only the blind can give effective leadership in the community of the blind, and the vast multitude of the blind of the developing countries are suffering from this acute problem. We should not think that the fortune and prosperity of the blind of the world should be judged from two angles, from two opposite directions; rather, development of one community should reflect equally on the development of the other community.

Since the World cannot exist without the Solar System, the Moon cannot shine without the Sun, Hamlet cannot be staged without the Prince of Denmark, Democracy cannot flourish without an Electorate, similarly an organization cannot achieve its goal with only its followers, i.e. without able leaders. Leaders are never born, they are trained and groomed with a view to lead the population to the cherished goal.

It should be the sincere effort of all concerned (i.e. all individuals both blind and sighted, particularly in the developing countries, all national organizations, both of and for the blind, respective national Governments and World Bodies, including their Regional Committees) to ponder over this problem of the growth of leadership in the area of the blind and adopt effective measures in this World Assembly, and implement those recommendations without any loss of time. Periodic exchange of ideas in this field, between the developed and the developing countries, can only produce the result to which all of us are looking forward. The world yesterday met with problems; we are planning today, and tomorrow we shall act upon.

## COOPERATION IN DEVELOPING LEADERSHIP

by Mr. Kevin Carey

Caribbean Council for the Blind

Laying aside, for the purposes of this presentation, that most of us are selfish in our personal, communal and national lives; even laying aside the less dire assumption that we are generous either when we can afford to be or when we are so poor it does not matter, and assuming that the world community is sensitive to urgent needs though incapable of coping (and I think this is a generous assumption), then if hundreds of millions of people on the verge of starvation cannot move the world community to act (rather than resorting to mere platitudes), the estimated forty million blind persons in the world stand little chance of an improvement in their lot.

When I first went to university in England in the early 1970s my generation was so well off it could afford to be radical and even generous. By the time I left university in the United States in 1974 the inevitable economic downturn resulting from the intrinsic weaknesses in the economic strategy of the developed world had already begun, precipitated by the oil price rises of late 1973 and early 1974. The paradox of the current position in relation to that of the early 70s is that it is not an act of kindness to support developing countries but a growth of wisdom. Developed countries cannot sell their goods if developing countries cannot afford to buy them. If the world changed slowly some new order might be manageable if not acceptable, but the transfer of information is more speedily achieved than the transfer of wealth, and rising (and not unreasonable) expectations have brought their own problems.

We in the area of work for the blind have a professional obligation to be informed of our subject but the obsession of some of us with it, though understandable, is unreasonable and may well distort our judgment. Nobody in public life with a sense of their own social sophistication would openly attack the notion that needlessly blind persons should be provided with the medical care which would restore their sight, just as such people would accept the assumption that education and social services are beneficial, but a person in public life has to enjoy phenomenal luck to go through a year without having to choose between the better of two evils.

It is often difficult enough to heighten social consciousness when it comes to the treatment of blind people but, great though this problem is, to overcome it is to gain victory in a skirmish. The war is still to be fought.

To become involved in this war heroism is not enough. As in present military affairs, a knowledge of weapons and how to use them is vital. In my experience the heroism or, if you like, the commitment, has come

mainly from blind people themselves but they are vulnerable to self-delusion, and agencies for the blind, under consumer pressure, are vulnerable to a guilt-complex which often leads them to believe that they are being patronising to their clients when they may not be—many a fine theatre critic has been a failure as a playwright, and even most of the most discerning beer drinkers are not brewers. There is a need to establish what blind people want but this is a totally different thing from swallowing the assumption that blind people are the best at providing it.

There will be critics who can write plays and drinkers who brew, and perhaps these are the most valuable people in the process of change, but we will mostly have to make do with people who are one thing or the other—advocates but not administrators, agriculturalists but not social workers—and dispense with sentimentality about both the qualities and limitations of blind people, either as a group or as individuals.

If this is the case, perhaps it is as well that in one sense at least far-sightedness is not required; we all know, in general terms at least, what is needed—more eye care, more education, more training, more employment possibilities for blind people and, even in the rather austere world economic climate lack of funds may not be so desperate that inspired fund-raisers are the main priority. The question for the future leadership in our work would seem to be how the gap is bridged between available resources and identified needs.

This is not to say that at present the funds are readily available but I believe that sound economic arguments are going to produce such funds more readily than the most inspired and enlightened humane theory. It is clear that the prevention and cure of blindness have a high cost/benefit ratio. It is clear, too, that governments much prefer to receive taxes than pay welfare, and though it is impossible to measure this accurately, most people would accept that education and training have a cost/benefit in positive terms both for the individual and the community. The new leadership at the very least will have to be amateur economists (and some of them not so amateur at that). Harassed governments, beset by budgetary limitations may not be able to be kind no matter how much they would like to be but these same governments cannot afford to miss the opportunity of increasing production and, at the same time, reducing the number of people who are an economic burden.

A field officer working in such a climate like this will do more harm than good if he only knows how to teach braille or craft, build a school or an agricultural training centre, unless he either has additional qualities in the area of politics and economics or unless he has efficient support in this area from his head office. When I began work in the Caribbean I came from a background of university political life and from the world of professional journalism. Even so I theashed and struggled in the tangled web of more than a dozen different governments and more than a dozen different agencies for the blind, not to mention a handful of strident pressure groups of blind people themselves. Apart from understanding and then trying to resolve problems, some inevitable, others created for the most short-sighted and selfish of



reasons, I had to overcome my own prejudices and those of the people with whom I worked; there were different political, social and cultural values to come to terms with; and not least, there was the problem of conveying all this back to my headquarters.

The development of new leadership to deal with such a situation cannot be a one-sided affair—the days of technical assistance are over, and rightly so, we must begin to take the notion of technical cooperation seriously. Without losing their compassionate motivation agencies for the blind must operate on strict business principles, only then can they demand the same standards of those communities they wish to help. At the same time, agencies cannot expect to take this so far that they impose policy on the grounds that they know best (which they may well)—recipients have the right to make mistakes for themselves and in the final analysis this may be the quickest learning process there is. On the other hand, over-sensitiveness to criticism and advice which disagrees with the views of the seeker of it must be avoided—the freedom to reject advice cannot exist without the freedom of somebody else to proffer it.

In spite of all the tensions and complications inherent in our work this is no time for a retreat into mere philosophizing although we should be aware of the problems we face. We know what is needed and in many cases we know, in principle, how to provide it and how to obtain the funds to provide it. The new leadership in our work must act as interpreters and to do this they will have to stray far from the languages of eye care and social welfare. Good interpreters need the best teaching in each of their languages and this will be true of our future generation—they will need to know not only the language of economics and politics, not only the language of medicine and welfare, but also the subtler language of culture and history and the crude language of poverty and desperation. All these things cannot be learned in one place, nor quickly, and we will all have to make allowances for each other. Advocates of improvement in the lot of blind persons are too weak to be over-fastidious in judging the shortcomings of others, but the position of all of us as a group is too weak to permit amateurs, no matter how well-intentioned, to perform tasks which demand a high degree of professionalism.

The fact that a great deal of legislation in countries throughout the world proclaims the rights of all without excluding blind persons means that we have come part of the way, but that very fact implies that, from now on we can expect no special favours, nor should we.

## **“COOPERATION IN DEVELOPING LEADERSHIP”**

by Ivan Ho, Malaysia

Why there are organizations for and of the blind in Malaysia needs no further explanations after all these years and especially after having attended the two General Assemblies of the International Federation of the Blind and of the World Council for the Welfare of the Blind in Antwerp, Belgium. Suffice it to say that the 1960's were turbulent years for both types of organization. Blind people then merely wanted to form a group to promote social and recreational activities, help each other in times of hardship and also to put forward suggestions for improving services run by the agency, the Malayan Association for the Blind (MAB). Leaders of this Agency interpreted the move as belittling the achievements, questioning their sincerity and the start of a campaign for taking over that organization. Each one of us won some battles and lost some and the score: disunity among blind people and the slowing down of programmes.

It was not difficult in those years to be a leader of the blind movement except that one must possess the fighting spirit. All that the leaders of the Society of the Blind in West Malaysia (SBWM) needed to do was to project MAB as a badly managed agency and to present SBWM as the champion for the cause of the blind which understood the true feelings of blind people and their aspirations.

Time flew and attitudes changed, so did support for SBWM. Suddenly leaders of the blind realized that time was not on their side. Blind people, even members themselves, were criticizing bitterly the two organizations for failing to live up to their expectations or to improve their standard of living and SBWM almost had to dig its own grave.

To shorten a long story, there was a change of leadership in both organizations at the turn of the 1970's and the new leaders decided to join hands in search of solutions to the numerous obstacles confronting the blind of the country. MAB accepted the fact that SBWM was there to stay and each one of us has specific goals to strive for.

Fear and suspicion die hard and cooperation was slow to develop. So, when the Swedish Federation of the Visually Handicapped proposed through the MAB, the convening of a Leadership Seminar at Kuala Lumpur in 1975, blind leaders accepted the invitation to participate with reservation. We were suspicious that the Swedish Federation would preach a philosophy contrary to our own since their president, the late Dr. Charles Hedqvist, was a prominent member of the World Council. That Seminar proved so successful, useful and stimulating that SBWM, utilizing the experience gained by some of the participants, organized the first SBWM Workshop in 1977 in which it examined the entire set-up of SBWM and drew up a five-year plan. In November 1979 SBWM will be holding another Leadership Seminar, with the financial support of the Swedish Federation, for 50 members with the

objective of training up new leaders to run its four Regional Offices and allow the present leadership to up-date their techniques.

With the passage of time, satisfactory cooperation has taken place and today blind people have elected representatives serving on all the committees of MAB, including the Executive Council. Only two months back a seat was offered to us on the national delegation to the Sixth WCWB General Assembly. To some extent the two organizations have agreed upon the areas of operation: the agency concentrating on the rehabilitational and vocational fields and the placing of blind people in open employment while SBWM will look after the social and recreational needs and general welfare of its members. When dealing with the public or approaching the various government ministries, we would consult each other to put out joint press statements or memoranda. There is still much room for cooperation and we are confident we can enter into more dynamic cooperative ventures without losing our identities and sacrificing our principles.

We have entered into a new era for coexistence and cooperation and we require a kind of leadership that is humble enough to forget past grievances but bold enough to face the challenges ahead. We need leaders with foresight and determination to transform ideas into realities in partnership with any organization with identical objectives. We require leaders that will look squarely at problems, identify the priorities and get down to serious work at the shortest time. We need leaders that have tact and good human relations and who are willing to hear others points of view. We need leaders that can motivate members to achieve worthy goals, and we need leaders who are prepared, not only to correct sighted people with wrong attitudes towards the blind but also that of the blind people towards themselves.

We in developing countries cannot afford the luxury of bickering over philosophies and arguing as to who best understands the problems of the blind: give opportunities to the best suited person to prove his/her abilities. We must utilize all available resources to achieve maximum benefits within the shortest time and time is one of the crucial factors in trying to help the millions of blind people in the Third World.

Finally, all organizations for the blind should recognize the rights and aspirations of blind people and take positive steps to provide opportunities for them to play active and responsible roles in determining their future. There is no better way to begin cooperation than for organizations for the blind to help the movements of the blind to develop sound and respectable leadership.

## MAKING THE RIGHT DECISION

by Robert Mercer, Executive Assistant to Managing Director  
Canadian National Institute for the Blind

Let me assume at the outset that most, if not all, of us are here at this world assembly because in some way or at some time we have displayed qualities of sound leadership. Given enough time to think we could even isolate those qualities and give vivid description to each of them. More often, however, we conclude that we do not have the time, and that a trained expert has a more complete view, or can describe management qualities in some better and more meaningful fashion. It is this situation that accounts for the dramatic increase in all forms of leadership and management consulting firms. Their real function is often seriously misunderstood by the students, the sponsor, and sometimes the instructors themselves.

It is my view that our strongest characteristics to lead and direct were developed unconsciously by each of us; they are known factors and emerge very gradually from our many and varied life experiences. They are the most important qualities and cannot be taught at leadership seminars or found somewhere in the pages of literature on good management practice. Such tools are only useful when they encourage self-examination and initiate thinking on the very things that we do on a day-to-day basis. Qualities of sound leadership are not teachable, but each of us can be taught to lead more effectively by carefully examining those characteristics that comprise our many strengths and weaknesses. It is this recognition that makes leadership training a worthwhile undertaking. Once we realize the limitation of such instruction we also accept the importance of self-reflection.

Simply stated, leadership is the direction or guidance of people and money. This includes, of course, efforts designed to expand or develop those resources in a manner whether consistent or not with accepted objectives. More explicitly, leadership is the one component of operating that allows for both appropriate and inappropriate utilization of manpower and capital. Not everyone is equipped for such responsibility or in fact interested in that form of challenge.

The crucial question for all of us is deciding the best direction for resources at our disposal. Each decision has some degree of importance in the overall operation, should not be taken lightly, and must be consistent with accepted objectives. You will recall my earlier reference to leadership training and its relationship to self-examination. The same relationship should be applied to each decision affecting our operation. Few people have isolated the importance of this principle, as crucial as it is to sound management practice. In my view there is nothing more important for making the right decision than constant self-examination, and careful inquiry into all factors that make any problem of concern to us as leaders.



It should now be apparent that this inquiry process in the field of rehabilitation and blindness prevention has very special significance. It is the crucial factor affecting the lives of other people. How many of our decisions are political, merely popular, or even chosen because they are the course of least resistance? At times they are not even consistent with established objectives. Have you considered as well that established objectives may no longer be consistent with the needs of those who most depend on your good judgment?

You must examine at all times the concept of blindness and blind people. Are we positive that our last decision was right because no one complained, or because it came as a general consensus of our staff? We are not wasting time by addressing such important issues and we must continue with the inquiry at every opportunity. It is not enough to conclude that we do not have the time for this kind of reflection on what we are doing.

It has been well established that agencies for the blind are not providing needed services, and may on the other hand continue certain programs which are no longer a matter of priority. How is this possible?

The most commonly expressed reasons are lack of resources, reluctance to change, "it won't work", and so on. It is interesting to me, however, that even with adequate resources, willingness to change, and a positive outlook, an organization may still experience severe criticism for not relating adequately to consumer needs. You may wish to consider the following as possible reasons for such a situation. From my own experience I would suggest that they are in fact the most significant reasons:

- (1) Leaders are not encouraged, and in most cases do not recognize, the relevance of self-examination, and yet most decisions are affected in some way by our personality. We are sometimes taught to separate our own beliefs from those of the organization, but is that really possible?
- (2) We seldom stop working to consider the factors around us that make each problem a possibility. Without this component we may find ourselves attempting to solve problems based on assumptions which we do not believe. Time must be spent in seriously considering the many assumptions surrounding a problem and the alternatives for decision-making.
- (3) Finally, not enough time is devoted to listening to those most affected by our decisions. We must find some better mechanism to stay in contact with blind people, recognize their equal ability and provide for their input on matters affecting their lives.

In conclusion, I wish to accept full responsibility for many of the generalizations made in this paper. Time did not permit proper documentation, but I do hope that the ideas expressed will cause you to examine further those factors which influence the direction given to resources at your disposal. Give more consideration to the complete picture and the world takes on a different meaning.

## BUSINESS SESSION 3

Thursday morning, August 9, 1979

### REPORT OF THE RESOLUTIONS COMMITTEE

Mr. Bengt Lindqvist, Chairman of the Resolutions Committee, presented 13 Resolutions, which were unanimously adopted by the Council after some amendments had been made.

#### RESOLUTION NO. 1

#### RESOLUTION ON COOPERATION BETWEEN WCWB AND IFB AND BETWEEN ORGANIZATIONS OF AND FOR THE BLIND

The Sixth General Assembly of the World Council for the Welfare of the Blind *commends* the efforts which were made at a joint meeting of the Honorary Officers of WCWB and IFB held in Bad Berleburg, GFR, in February 1979 to find a practical means of achieving major progress towards that level of unity which is necessary in the best interests of all the blind people of the world.

The Assembly *noted* the reluctance that has been expressed by the Third General Assembly of the International Federation of the Blind to proceed at the present time with active steps that could lead to a merger of the two world bodies in the foreseeable future.

Nevertheless, the Assembly *believes* that WCWB should be ready to respond to any initiative from IFB for the re-opening of negotiations towards consolidation of the activities of the two organizations within the spirit of the Bad Berleburg Declaration.

Meanwhile, the Assembly has *noted* with appreciation the wish of the International Federation of the Blind to discuss the realization of practical means of cooperation at the international, regional and national levels. Accordingly, the Assembly *empowers* the Executive Committee to make appropriate arrangements for mutual discussion of such topics to occur with representatives of IFB, with a view to achieving the maximum degree of understanding, harmony and practical co-operation.

It is *recommended* that the Honorary Officers, the Executive Committees and the regional bodies of both organizations hold joint meetings, joint consultations and exchange of information, in order to promote the greatest good for the blind of the world.

With reference to the Constitution of WCWB stating that "Where in any country there exists a substantial group of blind persons organized

into associations and where there are blind persons occupying leading positions in agencies for the blind, adequate provision should be made for their representation in the national delegation", this Assembly further *instructs* the Executive to establish a working group to investigate and present proposals concerning ways and means which could lead to increased participation of organizations of the blind on the national and on all international levels. The proposals concerning the national delegations on the General Assembly of WCWB shall be based on a quota system giving, wherever possible, at least fifty per cent of the seats to organizations of the blind.

In countries where there are no organizations for the blind, the national delegation may consist entirely of the representatives of the national organizations of the blind.

*Recognizing* the fact that more than two decades have passed since the Constitution of WCWB was formulated, with amendments at various stages, the time is ripe to review the Constitution in the light of developments that have occurred in global work for the blind, with a view to making the world body more representative and responsive to different groups, regions and interests.

It is *recommended* that the working group referred to above be asked to take appropriate action.

## RESOLUTION NO. 2

### RESOLUTION ON THE INTERNATIONAL YEAR FOR DISABLED PERSONS

*Bearing* in mind that the United Nations' general assembly has declared the year 1981 as IYDP;

*Recalling* the resolution and recommendations of the international organizations such as ILO, WHO, ECOSOC on the right for the handicapped to full participation in the socio-economic and cultural life of the community; and

*Noting* that full integration of handicapped persons into society can only be achieved by giving them equal opportunities in education and employment:

1. With particular reference to the interests of the blind, the General Assembly of WCWB *resolves*: that national governments of all member nations take effective measures to enable blind people to gain their rightful place in society, and that national organizations of and for the blind urge their respective governments to take necessary steps in this direction and create public awareness to achieve these objectives.
2. The WCWB Assembly notes with satisfaction the increasing active interest on the part of the United Nations and its various agencies

in promoting the cause of the blind and urges the United Nations and its allied agencies to allocate adequate resources to make the IYDP achieve the purpose for which it is being observed.

### **RESOLUTION NO. 3**

#### **RESOLUTION ON RURAL REHABILITATION FOR THE BLIND**

*Appreciating* that 80 per cent of the blind, particularly in developing countries, live in rural areas; and

*Recognizing* that most of these blind persons do not have access to basic rehabilitation services, leading to successful economic independence, social integration and resettlement;

This Assembly *recommends*

1. that priority be given to the evaluation of existing programs, research and the development of new and better low cost methods of rehabilitation service delivery for blind people in rural areas;
2. that consideration be given to implementing community-based rural training programs as one plan currently available for providing rehabilitation services, at the lowest cost, to the greatest number of blind and visually impaired people;
3. that according to the needs of each country, when suitable facilities are available and when economically feasible, residential rural training centres should be established and extension services provided, including follow-up and resettlement;
4. that in all proposed legislation for agrarian and land reform, provision should be made to include blind and visually impaired persons;
5. that efforts should be made to educate public opinion at all levels, from national leaders and government officials down to local village citizens, utilizing all available communications media in order to expand vocational opportunities for the blind in the rural areas;
6. that where farming and employment is on a seasonal basis, additional skills and handicrafts training should be included in the rehabilitation program in order to increase earning potential throughout the year; and
7. that international agencies should be encouraged to give priority in their assistance programs to rural rehabilitation projects.

### **RESOLUTION No. 4**

#### **RESOLUTION ON MOBILITY PROGRAMS FOR THE BLIND**

*Reaffirming* that one of the major goals in the educational and rehabilitation processes is the development of self-confidence and independence for every blind person;



*Realizing* the great importance of orientation and mobility services to reach that goal;

*Emphasizing* that mobility services should be available to all including the aged and for those in urban and rural areas; and

*Recognizing* the importance of the use of remaining vision in all aspects of mobility;

The Assembly *recommends*

1. that governments and agencies accept the responsibility of ensuring that professionally trained mobility instructors are available to all organizations and establishments providing services for the blind and visually impaired;
2. that where practicable, training courses for all staff who teach rehabilitation and orientation and mobility be established;
3. that in order to ensure that maximum effectiveness is derived from mobility instruction, education programs be carried out, directed to the public, in particular the motorists, governments and staff of those medical care and welfare institutions having a responsibility to blind persons;
4. that individual mobility programs take into full account the personal, psychological and social abilities of each person to be trained;
5. that administrators of programs for the blind accept the importance of orientation and mobility instruction in the total rehabilitation process; and
6. that in developing mobility services all forms of travel assistance for the blind be encouraged in both urban and rural environments including canes, guide dogs and electronic devices.

## RESOLUTION NO. 5

### RESOLUTION ON THE ENCOURAGEMENT OF PHYSICAL CULTURE AND SPORT FOR THE BLIND

*Noting* that regular sport encourages rehabilitation and integration of the blind, improves their self-reliance and self-confidence as well as being significant in countering the tendency to immobility and isolation caused by blindness; and

*Expressing* willingness to open up the path to sport for as many blind people of all ages as possible, to promote sport at schools for the blind, competitive sport, leisure and recreational sport and to set up continuous international contacts among blind athletes;

The General Assembly *resolves*

1. that all member organizations of the WCWB should pay increased attention to the problem of sport for the blind and should approach

governments, local authorities and the public so that programs for the all-round advancement of sport for the blind may be developed and carried out. Those responsible for sport for the blind should coordinate these activities in close cooperation with the national sports associations, member organizations of ISOD as well as other interested institutions and personalities;

2. that sport at schools for the blind and at sighted schools where blind students are integrated should be methodically and constructively supported. Influence should be brought to bear to ensure that sport is adequately considered in their curricula and has a place in the time-table, that there is provision for the instruction of specially trained teachers, that opportunities for sporting activities are offered also outside lessons, and that individual programs are set up for multiply-handicapped students;
3. that competitive sport is promoted and developed. The types of sport which have proved successful at national and international levels are, among others: running short, medium and long distances; high, long and triple jump; shot, discus, javelin and ball throwing; types of swimming such as breast stroke, free-style, back-stroke, butterfly and medley; winter sports in the Nordic and Alpine disciplines; water sports with rowing, canoeing and sailing; tandem cycling; roll ball, tor ball, goal ball and micro-football, bowling and lawn-balls; wrestling, judo, chess and table-tennis;
4. that recreational sports be introduced on a much larger scale to blind people of all ages and the multiply-handicapped. The visually handicapped should be encouraged to pursue their own activities on a personal basis, specifically in swimming, beach and water games, boating and paddling, tandem cycling, camping, winter sports, horse-riding, bowling, cricket, archery, orienteering, jogging, gymnastics, dancing, tourism, board and card games;
5. that there should be an extension of international contacts in sport for the blind because national activities call for the standardizing of events arising from international contests. Sports Commissions of all Regional Committees are to be set up for this purpose;
6. that sport for the blind in the developing countries be promoted by the advanced countries. The responsible officials in the advanced countries are urgently requested to train experts from the developing countries and to send out their own experts to the developing countries to establish sport for the blind. Furthermore, they should organize the exchange of ideas and provide sports equipment;
7. that in close cooperation with ISOD and including the blind athletes themselves an international sports organization of the blind be set up if strictly necessary. UNESCO, WHO, IFB, ICEVH, IBCA and other interested organizations shall be invited to cooperate. The new international sports organization should be based on the principles in the International Charter for Physical Education and Sport adopted at the General Assembly of UNESCO at its 20th Session on 21st November 1978 in Paris.

## RESOLUTION NO. 6

### RESOLUTION ON THE SITUATION OF BLIND WOMEN

*Recognizing* that at least half of the blind people of the world are women and that most of them live in the developing countries where facilities for their rehabilitation, employment and integration into family and cultural life are minimal;

*Welcoming* the recommendations of the First International Conference of Blind Women in Belgrade in November 1975 and the solidarity then achieved between blind women of many countries; and

*Aware* that the advancement of the status of blind women is a major concern both for the World Council for the Welfare of the Blind and the International Federation of the Blind and that both these world organizations are collaborating to realize the aspirations expressed at the Belgrade Conference;

The Assembly *resolves*

1. that a Standing Committee of WCWB be established to advance the cause of blind women (including those with serious visual handicap) with the fullest mandate to motivate Governments, United Nations agencies and international organizations, and to achieve a sensitive awareness of the particular needs of blind women including their integration into society and with special concern for the developing countries;
2. that this Standing Committee should achieve, internationally, regionally and nationally, the fullest cooperation with the International Federation of the Blind and its component organizations and should establish effective working relationships with all international organizations concerned with the rights and needs of women and with United Nations agencies which have responsibilities for this subject; and
3. that this Standing Committee should promote, in consultation with IFB, all attainable means of international contact between blind women including regional meetings and seminars with practical objectives.

## RESOLUTION NO. 7

### RESOLUTION ON SERVICES TO BLIND CHILDREN

*Recognizing* that the children of today are the world's citizens of tomorrow and also because 1979 is the International Year of the Child, this General Assembly takes cognizance of the fact that only one in fourteen blind children in developing countries find themselves and their parents served by an appropriate development program:

this Assembly *considers* that it is desirable for the Executive Committee of WCWB to emphasize the advantages of well-structured

early intervention programs and to ensure that a comprehensive library of appropriate literature is available to all persons involved with the training of young blind children.

It is *noted* with great concern that even the most elementary resources are lacking in many parts of the world and that there is a dire need for closer cooperation between affluent and under-provided societies.

*Realizing* that practical support is often available while the nature and extent of the needs and the identity of potential recipients is unknown: this Assembly *urges* its Executive Committee to give its immediate attention to ways and means of providing better coordinated services to blind children but especially those in developing countries of the world.

*Therefore* this General Assembly *recommends* that the WCWB Executive Committee establishes a *standing committee on services to blind children*. A relationship with ICEVH should be negotiated and to ensure that the needs of the total child are clearly brought into view, it is further *recommended* that a representative of UNICEF be invited to serve on this Committee and for that organization to provide some financial support to assist with the development of effective coordinating procedures by which the world's available resources might be more satisfactorily shared to the eventual betterment of the individual blind child and his/her family.

## RESOLUTION NO. 8

### RESOLUTION ON THE PREVENTION OF BLINDNESS

*Noting* with great satisfaction the progress which has been made during the past five years with the development of global action for the prevention of blindness, and particularly the rapid growth of the International Agency for the Prevention of Blindness, and the effective partnership which now exists between that agency and the World Council;

*Appreciating* the priority now given to the prevention of blindness in the World Health Organization global technical cooperation program, the establishment by WHO of a specific program for the prevention of blindness, the allocation of administrative and financial resources centrally and regionally, the establishment of a representative advisory group on the program and the outstanding work of that group and its forces in formulating strategies, defining objectives and developing appropriate technology;

*Noting* also the action for the prevention of blindness taken by UNICEF, UNDP, FAO, the World Bank, UNESCO and other United Nations agencies, the emphasis given to the control of blinding malnutrition during the International Year of the Child, and the resolution of the United Nations Economic and Social Council on the prevention of disability;



*Appreciating* also the establishment of intergovernmental programs for the prevention of blindness in various regions and the establishment by an increasing number of developing countries of national plans for prevention of blindness and the mobilization of substantial funds in support of such programs, and the creation of a special account for the prevention of blindness within WHO's voluntary fund for health promotion;

*Noting* however with apprehension the revised estimate of the prevalence of blindness in the world, the fact that the already massive number of the world's blind is increasing throughout much of the developing world at a speed probably in excess of population growth, and that even in the most advanced countries the link between blindness and ageing is adding substantially to the number of blind people in the upper age groups;

The Assembly *resolved*

1. that the prevention and cure of blindness shall continue to be a major objective and priority of the Council which should give all the support in its power to the activities in this field of WHO and the other United Nations' agencies and particularly to the work of the International Agency for the Prevention of Blindness, through its representation on the Executive Board and regional committees of that Agency and by urging all the Council's national delegates to support the activities of national committees for the prevention of blindness and efforts to create such committees in countries where these do not already exist;
2. that in addition to the essential long-term action to control the major causes of blindness within WHO's global objective "Health for all by the year 2000", all possible support should begin now to initiate efforts to restore sight to millions of people needlessly blind for lack of a cataract operation, to combat trachoma, to remedy particularly in emergency situations the vitamin deficiency which can lead to blinding malnutrition, and to extend to the whole affected area of West Africa the onchocerciasis control program with simultaneous action to provide training and employment for blind people who are resettled in new areas during the progress of the control program;
3. that the Council and its national and international members should take every opportunity to create public and political awareness of the consequence in human suffering and economic loss of preventable blindness and through its regional committees should seek to promote in every region and particularly at an early date in Africa an intergovernmental program for the prevention of blindness, and in all developing countries national programs aimed within a time scale of not more than twenty years at eliminating "the overburden of avoidable blindness" and at grafting an appropriate technology of eye care on the basic health services;
4. that the multi-disciplinary nature of blindness prevention involving scientists, economic and development planners, communicators,

educators and rehabilitation workers should be recognized and expressed, not only in the multi-disciplinary training courses for the prevention of blindness which are now being established, but also in the training of all who are concerned with the administration of services of and for the blind who should be aware of the technological possibilities and strategies for controlling blinding disease, so that they can make their essential contribution to the planning and implementation of national programs; and

5. that the Council recognizes that its task as a world organization working with its partner organizations in the broadest international context, is to confront the total problem of blindness in all its manifestations and in every place with the eventual complementary objectives that no one whose sight can be restored or saved should remain blind, so that maximum resources can thus be concentrated on assisting the independence and the fulfillment of those who are unavoidably blind.

## RESOLUTION NO. 9

### RESOLUTION ON AID PROGRAMMES FOR THE BLIND IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES

*Noting* that at least 80 per cent of the world's blind live in developing countries, a number equal to the population of a large country, and that this number is at present increasing with the speed of the population growth;

*Appreciating* the efforts made by this Council with its national and international members and by the International Federation of the Blind to improve services for the blind in the developing world and the increasing priority being given by various United Nations' agencies to the needs of the disabled in the Third World;

*Aware*, however, that despite these efforts all but a small minority of the blind of the developing countries continue to live in desperate poverty without any opportunity at present for education, rehabilitation and employment or for participation in social and economic life of their community;

*Noting* with pleasure the replies which have been received from the heads of many governments welcoming the proposal from the world organizations of and for the blind for a major advance in this field;

The Assembly *resolved*

1. that the needs of the blind of the developing world should be brought emphatically to the attention of the 34th General Assembly of the United Nations within the context of the global programme of basic needs, and as part of the preparation for the International Year for Disabled Persons, and to the Summit Conference of Non-Aligned Nations to be held shortly in Havana;

2. that, though there has been a welcome increase over the past five years in the amount of philanthropic and bi-lateral aid made available to work for the blind in the developing world, the resources available for this purpose still fall far short of minimum requirements and that, in consequence, the Council and its international partners should make a major effort during the next five years to ensure the inclusion in all appropriate multi-lateral and bi-lateral aid programmes of adequate aid for well-devised programmes for the relief of blindness in the developing world;
3. that all the Council's regional committees should consider the establishment of an appropriate mechanism to maximize the resources and to channel them into appropriate programmes for the blind of the developing world;
4. that the Council and its international partners, working with appropriate United Nations' and international agencies should do everything possible to increase awareness of the needs of blind people, and particularly of blind children who are victims of national disasters or who are refugees, that the international organizations concerned with disaster and with refugees should be aware of the special needs of the blind and of the essential need that a blind person in such a situation should have the security of his family, that rehabilitation needs of the blind should be provided for, both during the emergency period and following resettlement, and
5. that special attention should be given by relief agencies to the essential needs to ensure that relief supplies are appropriate to the needs of the blind and particularly that dried milk, provided in emergency situations, should be adequately fortified with Vitamin A concentrate to lessen the danger of blinding malnutrition.

## RESOLUTION NO. 10

### RESOLUTION ON WCWB SUPPORT OF THE ILO BLINDOC SERVICE

*Recognizing* the urgent and growing needs of blind and visually impaired persons all over the world for suitable programmes of vocational preparation, opportunities of productive activity in general or protected environments, and for full social integration into community life;

*Emphasizing* that the achievement of these objectives to establish and develop appropriate rehabilitation services and facilities is promoted through close cooperation between international, intergovernmental, governmental, and non-governmental organizations providing services to blind and visually impaired persons;

*Noting* that in the area of vocational rehabilitation of the disabled, the International Labour Office (ILO) has given strong and worldwide attention to the importance of all necessary measures to achieve full social integration, as evidence by its farflung programme of technical cooperation projects in developing countries, as well as other training activities, and

*Recognizing in particular* the high priority accorded by the International Labour Office in its rehabilitation programme to the needs of blind and visually impaired persons, especially through the BLINDOC information service;

This Assembly is *united*

- in expressing its full appreciation for the ILO's contribution to the rehabilitation of blind persons and in urging its continuation and maximum possible expansion;
- in calling upon all delegations to support these efforts through increased participation in information exchange on rehabilitation activities with the ILO BLINDOC Centre;
- and in declaring its general support of international cooperation in rehabilitation of blind persons, as it is endeavoured within the overall programme of the ILO and other UN specialized agencies, and to be given universal emphasis through the International Year of Disabled Persons.

## RESOLUTION NO. 11

### RESOLUTION ON THE HELEN KELLER CENTENNIAL

*Whereas* 1980 is the centennial of Helen Keller's birth;

*Whereas* this great woman contributed vastly to the lives of blind people throughout the world;

*Whereas* she was a great humanitarian and civil rights activist;

*Whereas* her character and intellect mark her as a woman of all ages; and

*Whereas* she promoted work for the blind internationally and strongly believed in the goals of WCWB;

There, be it *resolved* that it is requested that all regions and member countries dedicate events and projects during 1980 to the celebration of the centennial of Helen Keller's birth.



## RESOLUTION NO. 12

### RESOLUTION ON THE ORGANIZATION OF GENERAL ASSEMBLIES

*Commending* the efforts made by the Programme Committee to provide the fullest possible presentation of blind welfare of today, and at the same time *noting* with concern the enormous practical and economic problems involved in such a large programme;

This Assembly *urges* the Executive Committee to consider other programme arrangements which would facilitate the active participation of the delegates and shorten the length of the conference. Such arrangements could include a more limited selection of topics with concurrent sessions in different fields of interests.

In order to improve the possibilities for active and equal participation by all delegates, this Assembly *instructs* the Executive Committee to find ways and means of distributing all papers in ample time before the Assembly and in a form which will make them accessible to all participants.

This Assembly also *instructs* the Executive Committee to seriously consider an expansion in the number of languages to be used at general assemblies.

## RESOLUTION NO. 13

### ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The Sixth General Assembly of the World Council for the Welfare of the Blind, meeting in Antwerp, notes with satisfaction the earnest attempts made to hold the Assembly in Nigeria and appreciates the fact that its meeting there would have been of mutual benefit, both to the blind people of Africa and to those delegates and observers from other parts of the world. The Assembly regrets that, due to circumstances beyond control, the venue of the conference had to be changed to Europe. The Assembly hopes that it would be possible for the World Council to meet in Africa in the near future.

The General Assembly places on record its most sincere appreciation and thanks to all those concerned for making last minute arrangements to hold the meeting in Antwerp at very short notice. In particular the General Assembly *expressed* its gratitude:

- to the Government;
- to the host organizations for their warm hospitality;

- to Mr. Dyckmans, Mr. and Mrs. de Wulf, their staff and their volunteers for leaving no stone unturned for making necessary arrangements despite lack of time to enable the General Assembly to hold its deliberations with the minimum possible inconvenience;
- to the hotel management and its staff for their arrangements despite shortage of staff;
- to the interpreters for their efficient simultaneous interpretation and to Mr. Pedro Zurita, delegate from Spain, who voluntarily took upon himself the responsibility of interpretation, a job which he performed with the expertise of a true professional;
- to the Secretary-General Anders Arnör and his devoted and efficient secretariat for carrying out their job so well despite considerable practical difficulties, and
- to all those innumerable friends who directly and indirectly contributed to the successful holding of this Sixth General Assembly.

## REPORT OF THE STUDY GROUP ON MOBILITY

presented by J. Keith Holdsworth, Chairman

The Study Group met twice during the period of this Assembly but of course there were many other informal meetings of those interested in the subject of mobility.

Discussions ranged from the broadest consideration of mobility as an essential part of the rehabilitation and educational processes to more detailed examination of the role of mobility in individual self-development.

On the wider aspects of mobility the group strongly reaffirmed that mobility tuition should continue to be seen as an essential component of basic rehabilitation and of education.

The necessity for mobility to be provided within the curriculum of schools was emphasized, in order to ensure that each child had full opportunity to develop independent movement to the extent of his/her needs and abilities.

The group did note with some concern that in some countries it seemed that mobility tuition for pupils was not given adequate attention.

The question of the age at which mobility training should begin was discussed, as was the type of cane which should be used by children.

The consensus of the group was that it was unwise to nominate any particular age at which formal training should start, as this depended upon many personal and other surrounding factors.

For example, mobility tuition for children of pre-school age might best be given to the parents of the child so that realistic expectations could be developed by the family and so that appropriate sensory and movement development could take place from the beginning.

Whilst many children were apparently successfully introduced to some form of cane travel at 5 or 6 years of age, again the group considered that the use of the cane should not be introduced to children in a manner likely to restrict movement and the training should perhaps be seen as being a way of filling gaps in the child's ability to move about freely.

At the other end of the age scale, it was noted that in many countries the majority of blind people are aged and the group re-stated the necessity for mobility training to be available to all including the aged. It was recognized that limited mobility for an aged person, even in a restricted environment, could be as important to the individual as more extensive mobility to a younger person.

The group welcomed the continuing expansion of mobility services utilizing the long cane, but cautioned against the long cane technique itself being seen and understood as the whole of the mobility process.

Complete mobility was seen by the group as having important components of self-understanding and self-development, as well as psychological and social aspects. Mobility was seen as a matter of total movement.

Thus a high degree of self esteem and high motivation towards independence were considered to be of major importance in the full development of individual ability in mobility skills.

The group considered that in all countries the adequate preparation of staff to teach orientation and mobility was an essential prerequisite to the provision of mobility services.

Whilst staff training should always be at the highest level possible, nevertheless the group recognized the importance of staff training courses taking into account the needs, values and resources of the country concerned.

The question of the role of blind people as mobility instructors was given attention, it being concluded that the blind person with appropriate background could make a most valuable contribution to parts of mobility training where the sight of the instructor was not essential for safety or to give informational feedback.

The group again stressed the need to ensure that remaining vision be utilized to the full in achieving desired levels of mobility skill.

At the same time, however, it was recognized that much remains to be done in the areas of identifying functional vision and in designing teaching methods to make the fullest use of remaining vision in mobility.

The place of electronic devices in mobility was also discussed and it seemed clear that there is some lack at present in the preparation and dissemination of information concerning the ways in which such devices have been used, and could be used to advantage.

The Study Group emphasized the necessity for all countries to undertake public education programs to the general public, particularly motorists, to governments and to staff of institutions and establishments providing services to the blind.

The objectives of such educational programs should include the development of understanding and sound expectations about blindness, blind people and independent mobility.

It was considered by the group to be a clear governmental responsibility to see to it that appropriate staff training courses in orientation and mobility are established, together with an equal responsibility to ensure that trained mobility staff are appointed to each institution.

Finally, the issues and considerations of the group were formulated into a resolution which was submitted to the Resolutions Committee.

As chairman of the Mobility Study Group, I would like to thank all who took part in the meetings; we are encouraged by the obvious growth in mobility services but believe that there is much which yet remains to be done. This we see as the challenge of the coming five years before the next General Assembly of WCWB.



# **REPORT OF THE STUDY GROUP ON SECURING FINANCIAL SUPPORT (INCLUDING FUND RAISING)**

presented by Geoffrey F. Gibbs, Chairman

## **Introduction**

We considered this to be an area which has, and will continue to be, of critical importance to all member countries of WCWB.

It was agreed that methods of securing financial support must hold a central position in our planning as without there being sufficient funds available on-going development and the achieving of national and international goals is not possible.

Being aware that those delegates and observers present represented countries of greatly different economic, political and cultural understandings, we further agreed that methods of approach adopted within any one nation may not be easily transferred to any other situation.

Nevertheless, the group determined:

## **International Resources**

It was noted that in all probability international levels of funding will be reduced in the immediate future therefore in order to avoid increased competition for funding of programmes specifically concerned with blindness prevention and services for the blind, planners should take advantage of those more general programmes offered by the World Bank, UNESCO, the EEC and kindred bodies.

Planners must also be prepared to recognize that in their deliberations decision makers are increasingly likely to emphasize economic rather than purely humane considerations.

## **International Agencies**

The International members of WCWB should be congratulated for their rapidly increasing ability to raise and direct funds, particularly in view of the ever-present effects of inflation. In this connection, the expenditure of increasing time and effort by the International Service Organizations such as Rotary International and Lions International Foundation is extremely encouraging.

## **Government Support**

Governments which accept proper responsibility for their blind citizens are encouraged to ensure that this commitment is not eroded by increasing economic difficulties and where such a commitment has not been matched by action WCWB delegates must bring every pressure to bear for the benefit of blind people in their own country and throughout the world.

Further, where general legislation exists setting out the rights of citizens, its application to blind persons should be reflected in immediate programmes rather than long term negotiations.

### **Agency Fundraising**

In defining and promoting fundraising causes the dignity of the blind population *must* be respected as must the expectation of donors who, in today's world require more details as to the manner in which their contributions are to be utilized.

### **Cooperation**

We considered WCWB has the capability and the responsibility to provide an advisory and development service to assist its membership in determining appropriate means of securing continuing financial support.

We recommend this General Assembly take the initiative by establishing such a group as a sub-committee of the WCWB Finance Committee to provide guidance in this area.

This Committee should:

- (a) establish a library of fundraising procedures utilized by International, Regional, National, Governmental and Non-governmental agencies.
- (b) it should during the next quinquennium provide at least one article on fundraising procedures in every issue of the WCWB Newsletter.

## **REPORT OF THE STUDY GROUP ON LOW VISION AIDS AND THE MAXIMIZATION OF RESIDUAL VISION**

This group met under the chairmanship of Dr. Carl Kupfer and had a general discussion against the background of the action which has resulted from Resolution 13 of the São Paulo Assembly and, particularly, the Working Conference at Uppsala University last year which developed from the Geneva Meeting in 1975 of the Committee on Rehabilitation, Training and Employment.

The group agreed totally with the guidelines prepared at that Conference and the special emphasis which was there laid on individual variations in the requirements for low vision aids and on the need for an exact diagnosis and correct follow-up. However, the importance of this subject cannot be over-emphasized, having regard to the fact that if an adequate definition of visual handicap is employed, it is likely that over 80 per cent of those registered as visually handicapped will have residual vision.

In the past, possibly through lack of technological development, but also through a failure to understand the potentials of people with residual vision, there has been excessive emphasis on applying to all registered blind people, techniques which assume total loss of sight. One of the consequences has been a lack of individual motivation to use residual vision and an absence of sufficient research and development to produce an alternative technology.

This group therefore, whilst fully supporting the work which has proceeded to-date, wishes to see a continued effort by the World Council, its Research Committee and the ICEVH to develop, as an integral part of educational, rehabilitation and training programmes, an adequate technology and the appropriate professional personnel to apply it.

Specific proposals discussed by the group included:

- the need for further research in diagnosing potential residual vision
- more adequate assessment and evaluation of low vision aids, noting their increasing number and cost.
- the development of a simulated environment, on the lines of simulated cockpit trainers used in the aviation industry, in which low vision aids could be evaluated against individual variation in visual acuity and field.
- and the development of a new professional category of low vision specialist.

## REPORT OF THE STUDY GROUP ON RESEARCH IN BEHAVIOURAL SCIENCE AS RELATED TO BLINDNESS

*Chairman:* Dr. Nils Trowald, Sweden

### Summary

The group had two meetings, the first one attended by about 30 people and the second by about 10.

During the first meeting, Dr. Trowald gave a summary of different research activities going on in Scandinavia, Great Britain, the Soviet Union, Japan, France, the German Democratic Republic, the Federal Republic of Germany and the USA. The presentation was based on the report *Blindness Research in the World—as presented at the ICEVH Conference in Paris 1977*, written by research people from the above-mentioned countries and edited by Dr. Trowald. The report was given to all members of this Study Group.

The research which was presented and discussed referred to the following fields:

- (a) Mobility and different methods to evaluations mobility techniques
- (b) Development psychology and research about comparisons between blind and sighted children
- (c) Talking books and studies on this aid, for example compressed speech and other methods to help the listener to a more effective learning
- (d) Braille and methods used to analyse the reading behaviour
- (e) Low vision training and methods used to study eye movements during training
- (f) Psychological and pedagogical evaluations of technical aids, for example typewriters of Jumbo-type, the laser cane, etc.
- (g) Partially sighted and methods to increase their chance to read printed matter, for example with the help of better typography.

We finished the first meeting after a discussion.

During the second meeting of this Study Group, we discussed proposals to be considered during Business Session 3. The group wanted to stress WCWB's attention to the importance of Blindness Research in those fields and presents the following proposals:

The Study Group would like WCWB to

- (1) Inform university institutes all over the world that there is a need for research in the field of blindness. The organization in different countries shall support all kinds of research that has reference to the blind.
- (2) Encourage and work for the publication of research results.
- (3) Encourage and work for the organization of meetings for research people from different countries.



## BUSINESS SESSION 4

Thursday afternoon, August 9, 1979

### REPORT OF THE NOMINATIONS COMMITTEE

#### Election of Honorary Life Members

Captain H. J. M. Desai, Chairman of the Nominations Committee, submitted to the approval of the Assembly, a proposal which he felt sure would be very warmly received, namely that the President, Mr. Boris V. Zimin, who had served the Council so well during his mandate, be appointed an Honorary Life Member. This proposal was agreed unanimously.

A proposal based on correspondence with National Delegations, the the following should also be elected to Honorary Life Membership of the Council, was also adopted unanimously:

Mr. André Nicolle, France

Mr. Achille Dyckmans, Belgium

Mr. E. W. Christiansen, New Zealand.

The Chairman of the Nominations Committee then proposed the following nominations, to which the Council AGREED unanimously:

(a) **Members of the Executive Committee Nominated by their Respective Regions:**

*Africa*

Mr. Ismaïla Konate (Mali)

Mr. Moustapha Djelloul  
(Algeria)

Mr. George Ondieki (Kenya)

*East and South East Asia*

Mr. Suresh C. Ahuja (India)

Mr. Hideyuki Iwahashi (Japan)

Miss Winnie Ng (Malaysia)

Dr. (Mrs.) Mary S. Lee (Korea)

Mr. Monsur Ahmed Choudhuri  
(Bangladesh)

*Europe*

Dr. Horst Geissler (FRG)

Mr. André Nicolle (France)

Dr. Helmut Pielasch (GDR)

Dr. Roberto Kervin (Italy)

Mr. Arne Husveg (Norway)

Mr. Pedro Zurita (Spain)

Mr. Vassili Fedorenko (USSR)

*Middle East*

Sheikh Abdullah M. Al-Ghanim  
(Saudi Arabia)

Mr. Nihad Murad (Syria)

*North America and Oceania*

Mr. Ross C. Purse (Canada)

Mr. John Wilson (Australia)

Mr. Loyal E. Apple (USA)

Mr. Jerry Dunlap (USA)

Mr. Oral O. Miller (USA)

*Latin America and the Caribbean*

Mrs. Elisa Molina de Stahl  
(Guatemala)

Mr. Hernando Pradilla-Cobos  
(Colombia)

Mr. Geraldo S. de Andrade  
(Brazil)

- (b) **Members of the Executive Committee Nominated by International Members of the Council:**  
 Mr. Harold G. Roberts, Helen Keller International Inc.  
 Sir John F. Wilson, C.B.E., Royal Commonwealth Society for the Blind
- (c) **Members at Large on the Executive Committee:**  
 Mr. Eric T. Boulter, C.B.E.  
 Captain H. J. M. Desai  
 Mr. Stevo Vladusic
- (d) **Chairman of Consultative Committee:**  
 Mr. Wolfgang Stein, International Council for Education of the Visually Handicapped
- (e) **Honorary Officers:**
- |                            |   |
|----------------------------|---|
| <i>President:</i>          | Mrs. Dorina de Gouvêa Nowill                                  |
| <i>Immediate</i>           |   |
| <i>Past President:</i>     | Mr. Boris V. Zimin  |
| <i>Vice-Presidents:</i>    | Mr. Ismaïla Konate (Africa)                                   |
|                            | Mr. Hideyuki Iwahashi (East and South-East Asia)              |
|                            | Dr. Helmut Pielasch (Europe)                                  |
|                            | Sheikh Abdullah M. Al-Ghanim (Middle East)                    |
|                            | Mr. John Wilson (North America and Oceania)                   |
|                            | Mr. Hernando Pradilla Cobos (Latin America and the Caribbean) |
| <i>Honorary</i>            |   |
| <i>Secretary-General:</i>  | Mr. Anders Arnör  |
| <i>Honorary Treasurer:</i> | Mr. J. C. Colligan, C.B.E.                                    |
- (f) **Representatives of the Joint Working Party on WCWB/IFB Cooperation:**  
 Mr. Boris V. Zimin  
 Mr. Eric T. Boulter, C.B.E.  
 Mr. Oral O. Miller

## CLOSING SESSION

Friday morning, August 10, 1979

Chairman: Mrs. Dorina de Gouvêa Nowill

### Speech of the Retiring President—Mr. Boris Zimin

Allow me, please, to say a few words after the excellent work that our General Assembly has done. This is especially difficult today because in the course of ten days we have talked a lot, we have discussed a lot and we have dealt with most of our important problems but allow me to share with you two important thoughts which I think are of extreme importance to us.

We can say, with full conviction, that during the past five years our World Organization has done tremendous work. The past quinquennium has been a quinquennium of growth of our organization, growth in activity and in membership. During this five-year period, our organization has seen a very significant increase in the activity of our Regional Committees. This is also true as far as our Standing Committees are concerned and this is also valid for our cooperation and sharing in the activities of the International Agencies. The Honorary Officers, the members of the Executive Committee, the National Members have increased their involvement and their participation in the work of the World Council. We can say that the democratic participation has seen a tremendous increase during these five years; we can say that our ship, our ship which we call the World Council for the Welfare of the Blind, is sailing forward and is going ahead with strength and security.

The resolutions we have endorsed are a sort of working programme for our organization and we can find guidelines for the further expansion of our activity. This is what I wanted to say to you in order to make very short the overview of past and future work of our organization.

The second aspect I should like to share with you is the question of the philosophy of our organization—the philosophy of cooperation. I think it is most important that we have a very clear idea about this specific matter. When we talk about cooperation, some people understand cooperation with the International Federation of the Blind. I do not think this is correct. I think we should try to strengthen and enhance our cooperation to a higher level. I personally understand cooperation in the sense of cooperation with all organizations, all governments, all international governmental organizations, the non-governmental organizations and all the personalities who, in one way or another, are employed in work for the blind. We must admit, however, that cooperation with the International Federation of the Blind is one of the most important aspects of this matter.

I would like to draw your attention to the model of our World Council. The model of our World Council is a good reflection of true cooperation of different organizations which are represented in it. In the World Council we have representatives from national organizations, from organizations of and for the blind, we have observers, we have government representatives. This type of representation and cooperation has helped us in making and creating a very positive and fruitful atmosphere for our work. I think we must preserve the rights of all the organizations and institutions concerned to bring their contribution, to bring their little drop, to the overall work of our organization.

As far as the work of our World Council is concerned, I could tell a lot of things. I could refer to the activities of our late President, Dr. Hedkvist. I always agreed with him on the main views. We were of the opinion that, taking into account the present situation of the world, the present degree of development, we could not approach the solution of our problems in an absolute way. It is absolutely necessary that we cooperate with governments, with research institutions and so forth. For instance, we could never reach an adequate result as far as prevention and cure of blindness is concerned if we did not cooperate with ophthalmologists; we could not solve the problems of technical aids if we did not cooperate with technologists and engineers; we could not solve the problems of education if we did not cooperate with educators and educationalists. We cannot solve the problems of the blind without the participation and active cooperation of the national governments and in this whole context the voice of the blind has an adequate place to declare and express the needs and aspirations of the blind people of today. The World Council is an exceptional platform for the cooperation we have described but we also have to concern ourselves with the possible unification and unity of the world social movement of the blind and in this context cooperation with the International Federation of the Blind has a special importance. We have sincerely sought this approach to cooperation and this was expressed in the document from Bad-Berleburg. Unfortunately, the time for this approach, for the coming together, has been postponed for reasons that are beyond our control and we will have to devote a lot of time to attain better understanding and more positive cooperation. If our friends from the International Federation of the Blind consider that the time is not yet right for such getting together, let us accept that the time has not yet come. I think we should devote a lot of effort to smooth the controversy and the rivalry between organizations of and for the blind; there is no reason for such conflict as far as the two organizations are concerned. Each one makes its positive and necessary contribution and we could not do without one or the other. I think that the elimination of these conflicts at a national level would also eliminate the controversy at an international level. I think we all should agree that the philosophy of the World Council is a correct one and I appeal to all of you to preserve our World Council for the Welfare of the Blind. We must preserve this type of work in a loyal way so that both organizations of and for the blind, institutions and all people concerned in work for the blind, can have a means and platform for communication.



And finally, I want to thank all of you for the pleasant and encouraging words which have been addressed to me during these days and very especially yesterday. To all of you who have been with me during the past five years, to all of you who have worked closely with me, we have carried out excellent work but we have carried it out together—I with you and you with me. I want to express my satisfaction for the fact that we have been able to elect, in such a unanimous way, our new President, Mrs. Dorina de Gouvêa Nowill. We all lay great hopes in her and I want to tell her today, with wholehearted sincerity, that I, and all of you, are ready to cooperate with her to the best of our ability. I want to wish Mrs. Dorina de Gouvêa Nowill a lot of success. I want to wish success to all of you and I want to wish success to our World Organization. Thank you all very, very much.

## Speech of the newly-elected President—Mrs. Dorina de Gouvêa Nowill

Mr. Boris Zimin, our President for a few moments yet, Ladies and Gentlemen, I have already thanked all of you for your confidence in bringing me here for this very important task as President of the World Council for the Welfare of the Blind and I will do my best to follow the magnificent examples that we have had from Eddy Baker and Boris Zimin.

I realize that I am not here to command—I am here to guide. I am here to work and I need your help and your advice to be able to fulfil my task. Our President has just told us about the main points in the philosophy of the work of the World Council for the Welfare of the Blind. He has already told us about the theme of our Sixth General Assembly—Cooperation. Believe me, I can, at this very important moment of my life, commit myself to work for the full participation of all of us involved in the education, rehabilitation and welfare of and for the blind. Cooperation requires full participation; full participation depends a lot on inter-relationship, and inter-relationship should always be obtained at all levels of our work—international, regional and national. We, as members of the World Council for the Welfare of the Blind, are a small world that reflects the immense universe. We are an amalgamation of cultures, languages, political and religious beliefs. Our answer to the problems of the blind has to be based upon universal concepts and activities which have to be feasible to all cultures, to all regional needs and to all specific needs of blind people in the world. We have different and intricate paths, but they should all combine together to constitute a broad, open and ample avenue. We are different, but we are all human beings and I am sure that, inside each of us, there is always an ideal that will guide our steps.

This Assembly has given us guidelines on thirteen resolutions which have been approved by all of us. I believe that we will all be faithful to these resolutions although many changes may occur during their application to the real needs of blind persons. We have in our hands, a team of workers—honorary officers, executive committees, permanent standing committee, regional committees—and I believe that with this team we *have* to be able, we *will* be able, to put forward everything that has been expressed at this Assembly, perhaps in different languages, perhaps in different ways, perhaps with different methodologies but that which has been expressed by a majority. I am sure that all of us, at this moment in time when we are about to return to our own countries with all that we have learnt, have only one aspiration—that we will cooperate and that participation will be allowed to everybody, because we all need it. We must cooperate to prevent blindness and to cure blindness; we must cooperate to educate blind children and make culture available to all blind people; we must cooperate in the field of rehabilitation because every blind person should have a share in work in order to be able to have full participation in the community. I have

based my life—my private life and my working life—on one thing: I have a firm, undestroyable belief in human beings and it is with this belief that I am starting to work now as your President and I hope—I am sure—that I will be even more firm in my belief at the end of this next five years.

Finally, let us base our participation on partnership—partnership of blind persons with sighted persons, partnership of organizations of the blind and organizations for the blind, partnership of professionals and partnership with volunteers. We all have, at the same time, a duty and a right to participate in all the activities of the World Council for the Welfare of the Blind.

In conclusion I would ask you, as I ask myself, in every minute of our work to remember first of all that we have to be faithful to blind children, we have to be true to blind youth and we have to be respectful and lovable to blind elderly people.

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**The President then declared the Assembly closed.**





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